MEMOIRS

FOR THE

HISTORY

OF

Madame de MAINTENON

AND OF THE

LAST AGE.

Bonam facile crederes, magnam libenter.

TAC.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH,

BY THE

Author of the FEMALE QUIXOTE.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

Printed for A. MILLAR, and J. NOURSE, in the *Strand*; R. and J. DODSLEY, in *Pall-mall*; L. DAVIS, and C. REYMER, in *Holbourn*. M DCC LVII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

CONTENTS.

VOL. II.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE disorders of the court. Page 1

CHAPTER II.

The disgrace and return of madame de Montespan. 4

CHAPTER III.

Madame Scaron's *journey to* Antwerp. 11

CHAPTER IV.

The dutchess de la Valliere *turns carmelite.* 26

CHAPTER V.

The purchase of Maintenon. 35

CONTENTS.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

The retreat of madame de Monteſpan. 42

CHAPTER II.

The commencement of the king's affection for madame de Maintenon. 60

CHAPTER III.

Cabals of the devotees, the murmurs of the courtiers. 70

CHAPTER IV.

A marriage propoſed to madame de Maintenon. 82

CHAPTER V.

Madame de Monteſpan *returns to court.* 86

CHAPTER VI.

Madame de Maintenon's *journey to* Barege. 92

CHAPTER VII.

Madame de Maintenon *remains at court.* 97

CHAP-

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER VIII.

The year 1675. 105

CHAPTER IX.

The year 1677. 118

CHAPTER X.

Of Charles d'Aubigné. 128

CHAPTER XI.

Madame de Maintenon's *converſation with the king.* 139

CHAPTER XII.

The imprudence and fall of madame de Monteſpan. 144

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

Madame de Maintenon *is made dame d'Autour to the dauphineſs.* 146

CHAPTER II.

The chambre-ardente, or burning-court. 157

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER III.

Mademoiſelle de Fontanges. 164

CHAPTER IV.

The duke du Maine *made prince of* Dombes. 179

CHAPTER V.

Of the converts to the Roman *church.* 190

CHAPTER VI.

The conduct of madame de Maintenon *towards the marchioneſs de* Monteſpan. 199

CHAPTER VII.

Madame de Maintenon's *conduct towards the queen.* 207

CHAPTER VIII.

The death of the queen. 215

CHAPTER IX.

The king's paſſion for madame de Maintenon. 220

CHAP-

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER X.

Colbert *and* Pelletier. 232

CHAPTER XI.

Madame de Maintenon *refuſes the poſt of lady of honour.* 235

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER I.

The marquis de Richelieu is pardoned by the king. 250

CHAPTER II.

The princes of Conti. 253

CHAPTER III.

The devotee's. 266

CHAPTER IV.

Revocation of the edict of Nantes. 271

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER V.

Madame de Maintenon's *paſſion for the king.* 293

CHAPTER VI.

Journies to Marly. 297

CHAPTER VII.

The king's deſign in favour of madame de Maintenon. 302

22 JU 67

MEMOIRS

MEMOIRS
FOR THE
HISTORY
OF
Madam de *Maintenon*,
And of the
LAST AGE.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

The disorders of the court.

THE example of Lewis was fatal to the manners of his court; the contagion spread, and love intrigues were the sole employment of the courtiers. Madame de Soissons was capable of

of the moſt maſculine crimes to ſatisfy her ambition, and of the moſt ſcandalous exceſſes to vary her pleaſures. The marchioneſs de Coetquen enſlaved, and deceived Turenne. The cardinal Legate, intoxicated with his paſſion for the dutcheſs de Créqui, confidently ſaid to the duke, 'my 'pleaſure would be leſſened by one half, 'if I thought I were not underſtood.'

The duke of Orleans, more ſolicitous about the graces of his perſon than his fame, after acknowleging that he was jealous of his firſt wife, excited the ſuſpicions of his ſecond. The queen's maids of honour were too often tempted not to yield ſometimes. Thoſe of the dutcheſs of Orleans, who were diſmiſſed upon a ſuſpicion of gallantry, were conſtantly replaced by others, who with prohibitions to pleaſe, had forms the moſt likely to diſobey. Several of our celebrated beauties carried with them into foreign courts our paſſions and our luxury.

Mademoiſelle de Kerouallé * reigned in England, with as much power as any

* Louiſa Renée de Penancoët, created dutcheſs of Portſmouth in 1762, and dutcheſs d'Aubigné in 1694, this laſt title deſcended to her ſon Charles Lenox duke of Richmond: ſhe was preſented to king Charles II. by Henrietta his ſiſter. The moſt powerful of her rivals was Nell Gwin, an Engliſh actreſs, mother to the duke of St. Albans.

woman

woman could poſſeſs who was miſtreſs to a king inceſſantly oppoſed by his parliament. Mademoiſelle de la Perouſe governed the electreſs of Bavaria, although ſhe was beloved by the elector. Mademoiſelle de la Tremouille conſoled herſelf in Denmark for having failed in her attempts upon the king's heart, by the glory of enſlaving his brother *, and the great chancellor †.

Louvois himſelf felt the tender paſſion: madame du Freſnoy, the wife of one of his clerks §, after having tried the effects of her charms upon monſieur de Villeroi, and the duke de Caderouſe, attacked the monarch, and his miniſter, was diſliked by one, and enſlaved the other. Louvois, however powerful, however independant in all things elſe, yet ſubmitted to the general law, which decrees, that the miſtreſs of a ſtateſman ſhall be his chief counſellor. That he might yield with greater decency,

* Prince George afterwards married to queen Anne.

† The count of Griffenfeld.

§ Madame du Freſnoy ſups here every night, ſhe has the form of a nymph, a divinity; but madame Scaron, madame de la Fayette, and I think her inferiour in beauty to madame de Grignan. Not that her complexion is leſs fine, or her mein leſs noble, but her eyes have no expreſſion, the make of her face is not to be compared to yours, her mouth is not perfect. She is ſo intent upon her own beauty, that ſhe ſpeaks but very little, yet that little ſeems to become her. Sévigne's letters, 27 Jan. 1672.

he thought fit to raiſe his miſtreſs, and created a poſt for her in the queen's houſhold. She was made lady of the bed: he received all petitions from her hands: and every one courted her intereſt.

It happened one day, that a decrepit old woman preſt in among the croud which ſurrounded the king, when he was at dinner: the duke of Orleans put her back, aſking her what ſhe wanted. 'Monſieur, 'ſaid ſhe, I would intreat the king to pro-'cure me the means of ſpeaking to *mon-'ſeigneur de Louvois.*' 'There is ma-'dame du Freſnoy, replied the king, ſhe 'can do it eaſier than I can.'

CHAPTER II.

The diſgrace and return of Madame de Montespan.

1672. MADAME de Monteſpan, no longer troubled with her huſband, ſupported by her family, and depending upon her fruitfulneſs for the preſervation of the king's affections, began to ſhew her power, and to reign with oſtentation. She had accompanied the king in his journey to Flanders the preceding year, and had ſo far overcome

overcome every principle of virtue, every nicer ſenſe of ſhame, and regard to decency, that ſhe ſhewed herſelf to the world without a bluſh, in the character of miſtreſs to the king. Till then, ſhe had appeared either uncertain of her place, or anxious for her reputation. But, ſecure of her influence over the king, ſhe threw off all reſtraint, and openly braved the queen, la Valliere, and the whole kingdom. Perhaps ſhe thought that by aſſuming airs of dignity and importance, the irregularity of her conduct might be leſs ſubjected to cenſure: perhaps ſhe feared that the king, by keeping his paſſion for her concealed, might confirm himſelf in ſcruples, which undiſſembled guilt often deſtroys. Or perhaps ſhe had till then, been carried away with the pleaſure of imitating a lover too young to know what real grandeur was, and too tender to ſolicit it. However it is certain, that ſhe at firſt reluctantly admitted, and afterwards eagerly graſped at all honours, every advantage, with which ambition could be ſatisfied, that repin'd at not being placed upon a throne.

The princes and great lords of the court were delighted to find their king reſtored to them, whom this ſecret intrigue had too long kept from their adorations. Their homage was now paid entirely to the mar-

chioneſs, through her they engaged the favour of their ſovereign. Every day increaſed dependance and ſervility. All was dignity in the lover, all haughty diſtance in the miſtreſs, in the courtier all profound ſubmiſſion, reſpect and adulation.

This was the era of the change that was introduced in our manners, they became more eaſy, more flexible, but loſt in freedom what they gained in politeneſs.

Madame de Monteſpan endeavoured to reconcile imperious vice with humble piety. She had formed a ſet of morals for herſelf, too looſe for a chriſtian, too ſevere for a miſtreſs. Her fine hands did not diſdain to work for the poor: ſhe forced herſelf to believe that frequent alms, a conſtant attendance at divine ſervice, ſome exterior practices of devotion would purchaſe a pardon for her ſcandalous adultery. She even preſented herſelf at the holy table, favoured by ſome abſolutions, which ſhe purchaſed from mercenary, and procured by artifice from ignorant prieſts.

One day ſhe endeavoured to obtain abſolution from the curate of a village, who had been recommended to her, on account of his flexibility. 'What, ſaid this man 'of God to her, are you that marchio-'neſs de Monteſpan, whoſe crime is an

'offence

'offence to the whole kingdom? Go,
'madame, renounce your wicked habits,
'and then come to this awful tribunal.'

Madame de Monteſpan went away in a rage, and complained to the king of the inſult ſhe had received, demanding juſtice upon the confeſſor, as if perſevering in his duty had been a crime againſt her. The king, who was not ſure that his authority extended ſo far, as to judge of what paſſed in the ſacraments between God and man, conſulted Boſſuet, whoſe learning he reſpected, and the duke de Montauzier, whoſe ſtedfaſt virtue he revered. Boſſuet without heſitating a moment, praiſed the prieſt for an act of reſolution and courage, which probably he could not have been capable of himſelf, and Montauzier replied with ſtill leſs reſerve, that madame de Monteſpan ought to thank him for having ſpared her the guilt of ſacrilege. Yet madame de Montauzier had been generally ſuſpected of rivetting the chains which her huſband would have broke.

The king, whoſe heart was formed to receive thoſe truths which ſovereigns are ſo little accuſtomed to hear, promiſed them, that as ſoon as he returned from the army he would break off all connexion with the marchioneſs de Monteſpan; he even permitted Boſſuet to write to him freely upon

that ſubject; there are two of his letters to Lewis, in which he earneſtly exhorts him, by every motive of religion, every ſentiment of glory, to continue faithful to his oaths.

When the king returned from the campaign, the conteſt between love and devotion was renewed; the family of Mortemar practiſed all their arts; the marchioneſs de Monteſpan ſpread all her allurements; the devotees made pathetick remonſtrances, but the king ſtill continued irreſolute. The queſtion was, whether the miſtreſs ſhould be baniſhed from court or not, and this queſtion was diſcuſſed as a very difficult caſe of conſcience. At Paris all agreed that ſhe ought to be removed: at court opinions were divided.

The rigid caſuiſts, who were all enemies to madame de Monteſpan, declared with Boſſuet, that this correſpondance ſhould be broke off in the moſt open manner imaginable. They preached to the king, that he ought not to diſpoſe of his heart as he pleaſed: they quoted to him the maxim of the wiſe, that whoever was unwilling to yield to temptation, muſt fly from it: they repreſented to him that the crime being publick, the reparation ought to be ſo too, and gave him long tracts which he never read.

Thoſe

Thoſe who had more policy than rectitude, oppoſed this opinion with very ſpecious reaſons. They alledged that ſome regard ought to be ſhewn to the honour of a woman, whoſe fault had been, to yield to an almoſt reſiſtleſs temptation. That a publick reparation of this fault would load madame de Monteſpan with infamy, and might indeed afford a uſeful leſſon to the court, but would give ſcandal to the whole kingdom. The people, they ſaid, ought not to be made acquainted with the weakneſſes of their ſovereign, the examples of the ancient church proved nothing, circumſtances were greatly altered; it was madneſs in theſe perverſe times, to think of emulating the perfection, the auſterity of that happy age, the virtues of which we were more likely to admire than hope to imitate. It was ſufficient to break off all correſpondance with madame de Monteſpan, without diſmiſſing her from her employment in the queen's houſehold: what merit would there be in the ſacrifice, if ſhe was kept at a diſtance? to ſee her in publick every day, without ſeeing her in private, was a trial worthy the great ſoul of his majeſty.

Lewis admitted this reaſoning to be juſt, it was ſuch as his own heart ſuggeſted: thoſe who were wholly diſintereſted, argued in a different manner. Of what uſe, ſaid

they, will it be to remove the marchioneſs? Will not his paſſions ſoon make a new madame de Monteſpan of ſome other lady? It is neceſſary that our ſovereigns ſhould have miſtreſſes who may ſometimes tell them truths which they would not hear from the mouth of a man, and which no man would venture to tell them.

Already ſeveral ladies made advances to the king, ſome managed their deſigns with art, others avowed them with boldneſs. Madame de Chevreuſe, whoſe perſon after being the temple, was become the tomb of pleaſures, produced madame de Luynes as a candidate for the king's heart, but ſhe had little or no wit. Madame de la Ferté engaged in the conteſt, ſhe indeed had a great deal of wit, but very little beauty. One of the courtiers was baſe enough to intreat the king, would make uſe of his ſervices if he had any deſigns upon madame de Grancey * aſſuring him that he would employ all the authority, which as uncle to the young lady he had a right to exert, and ſolicit for him with all the zeal of one of the oldeſt and moſt faithful of his ſervants. 'Monſieur, replied the king, ſmiling, we are 'both too old, you to ſeduce a girl of 'fifteen, and I to love her.'

* Louiſa-Elizabeth Rouxel de Grancey Dame d'Autour to Maria Louiſa of Orléans queen of Spain.

While

While meaſures were taken to remove madame de Monteſpan from court, ſhe appeared there with all the additional charms which long abſence beſtows upon an object who has been once ardently loved. The king fled from her, and ſhe avoided him without any appearance of affectation, yet they always met. They ſeemed ſolicitous to ſhun, yet were continually approaching each other; and unperceived by themſelves, they met again, and bluſhed.

Love revived in their hearts, their eyes ſaid a thouſand ſoft things, ſhame ſeparated them once more, tenderneſs brought them again together, one moment's converſation at a window deſtroyed all the labour of Boſſuet. Ah! what eloquence is ſo powerful, as the language of two charming eyes.

CHAPTER III.

Madame Scaron's *journey to* Antwerp.

MEAN time the duke du Maine grew tall, lovely, ſenſible, but gave plain indications that he would be lame. He was born perfectly ſtrait, but at three years old, when he was cutting his double teeth, he was ſeized with ſuch violent con- 1674.

vulſions that one of his legs was contracted by them and was much ſhorter than the other.

All the art of the faculty at Paris had been exhauſted without ſucceſs, d'Aquin firſt phyſician to his majeſty adviſed him to ſend the child to Antwerp, to be put under the care of a phyſician there, who was in great eſteem for his extraordinary abilities in his profeſſion. Either to avoid expence, or to prevent inconveniencies, the child was not to be known. Madame Scaron was directed to call herſelf the marchioneſs de Surgeres of the province of Poictou, the prince paſſed for her ſon, however the attendants of the duke du Maine, were ſo numerous, that it was eaſily perceived his parents were of a diſtinguiſhed rank. Madame Scaron betrayed the ſecrecy that was enjoined her, by her extreme ſolicitude to relieve all the diſtreſt perſons who offered themſelves to her compaſſion, and by the care ſhe took to make the young prince ſenſible to the pleaſure of beſtowing. Having provided herſelf with permiſſion from Rome, ſhe cauſed the tabernacles of the churches that were in her rout to be opened, and gave ſilver boxes for the pix to thoſe that had none before.

The remedies of the empirick were of a violent nature, madame Scaron could not

not ſupport the ſight of the preparations only; a perſon who was preſent obſerving her terrors and anxiety, ſaid, 'We do 'not ſee the father of this child, but this 'lady is doubtleſs the mother.' The little duke had already ſenſibility enough to be aſhamed of ſhewing his infirmities to a foreigner. 'Monſieur, ſaid he to the 'phyſician, I was not born thus, you ſee 'my mother; and my father is very far 'from being lame.'

The quack forced nature, he lengthened the limb, but did not give it ſtrength, and ſent the duke back to Paris with an aſſurance that he would be no longer lame, but with ſymptoms that ſhewed a greater diſpoſition to it than before.*

The care ſhe had taken of the prince during this journey, did not go unrewarded. The king caſting his eyes upon the liſt of penſions, ſaw two thouſand franks for madame Scaron, he eraſed that article, and put two thouſand crowns in the place of it. This benefaction by ſecuring her the means of living agreeably in the city, bound her ſtill faſter to the court, and indicated new

* Madame de Maintenon, before the child was acknowleged, carried him to Antwerp, to ſhew him to a phyſician who was famous for curing lameneſs, but he came back in a worſe condition than he went. *Memoirs of the princeſs de Montpenſier.*

favours

favours, and more laſting chains; the ſociety of her former friends was now more eagerly ſought than ever, ſhe gave them all her leiſure hours, and found ſo much pleaſure in their converſation, that ſhe regretted ſhe had not more to give.

The king did not ſeem to have the ſame diſlike to the marchioneſs de Surgeres, as he had ſhewn to madame Scaron. She had been repreſented to him as a fantaſtick, vain-glorious woman, who muſt be ſoothed with adulation, and reſpect. He found her modeſt, obliging, mild, and inſinuating; he now admitted her to his private parties of pleaſure, at the intreaty of madame de Monteſpan, who obſerving this growing eſteem foretold him, that when madame Scaron was better known to him, it would be greatly encreaſed.

The duke du Maine, whoſe birth was now almoſt publickly known, contributed to fix the king's good opinion of madame Scaron, by a very lively and very ſeaſonable anſwer he one day made him. Lewis, like all the Bourbons, was a very tender father, he did not diſdain to play with his little ſon, and being charmed with the ſprightlineſs of his wit, he could not help telling him that he was very ſenſible. 'How ſhould I be otherwiſe, re-'plied the child, when I am educated by

'wiſdom

'wiſdom herſelf.' This anſwer procured the governeſs a hundred thouſand francs.

However the king did not yet perfectly underſtand her character, he rather ſuffered than invited her to his private ſuppers with madame de Monteſpan: what madame d'Hudicourt had ſaid of her, made an impreſſion which was not yet effaced; he thought her vain, oſtentatious, fond of exalting her own, and leſſening the underſtanding of every other perſon: but after converſing with her frequently, he was ſurpriſed to find in her ſo much good ſenſe, with ſuch engaging modeſty, ſuch humble diffidence; he believed perhaps that ſhe conſtrained herſelf before him, and perhaps he forced himſelf to believe ſo.

The duke du Maine, and the count de Vexin * his brother, were legitimated. The duke, young as he was, had the poſt of colonel general of the Swiſs, and the count was named to the abbey of St. Germain des-Prés. They at length appeared openly as the king's ſons, at a ball given by the dutcheſs de la Valliere.† So nu-

* Lewis Céſar de Bourbon, Count de Vexin, born June the 20th 1672. Named to the abbey St. Germain des-Pres, he died January 10, 1683.

† The little princes are not yet ſeen, the eldeſt is with his father and mother, he is very handſome, but no one is allowed to ſee him. Madame Scaron alſo ſeldom appears in publick. Letters from madame de Sévigné January 1. 1674.

merous

merous, and ſo beautiful an offspring was a pleaſing ſpectacle to Lewis. He beheld at once a dauphin of whom already great hopes were conceived, mademoiſelle de Blois, and the count de Vermandois, his children by madame de la Valliere; the former all beauty and grace, the latter who already felt that he was the ſon of a king. The duke du Maine whoſe vivacity ſhewed that he would not halt in the race of glory. And the count de Vexin, to whom an Italian aſtrologer had predicted that he would one day ſway the ſcepter of Poland.

The education of the duke du Maine was entirely truſted to madame Scaron; ſhe choſe all his preceptors and his maſters, ſhe divided her authority with monſieur le Ragois, nephew to the abbe Gobelin, a man of great learning and rectitude, one who had more wiſdom than wit, and capable of extreme application, in a word, a man exactly qualified for the preceptor of a prince, who ought to merit by his virtue, the rank fortune had placed him in. When a more advanced age, and a better ſtate of health, rendered the little duke more capable of inſtruction, ſhe put him under the care of Chevreau, the ſame who wrote a hiſtory of the world, and converted in three weeks the princeſs Palatine who was deſtined for the wife of the duke of Orleans.

Madame

Madame Scaron reſerved to herſelf the pleaſing taſk of forming his mind to rectitude, his heart to benevolence, and ſhe ſucceeded in it. The young prince had very happy inclinations, great quickneſs of apprehenſion, great candor and ſenſibility, and an extreme attachment to his governeſs; he was dearer to her than to his mother, and he loved her infinitely more: this reciprocal tenderneſs, proved very advantageous to the prince, who owed the great fortune he afterwards poſſeſſed to a woman who had a thouſand times ſaid to him, 'When you are a great 'man you will forget me.'*

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan ſometimes took the trouble to examine into the methods of her childrens education, ſhe would make alterations, diſapprove of the plan already eſtabliſhed, but was particularly ſolicitous to leſſen the expence; for madame de Monteſpan had all the avarice of a perſon, obliged by her ſituation to live with a magnificence her inclinations diſavowed.

The governeſs ſaw with extreme uneaſineſs theſe uſeleſs innovations, ſhe complained that the children were ruined, that they wanted neceſſaries, that they were brought

* Memoirs of the marquis de la Sare, manuſcript of mademoiſelle d'Aumale.

up

up like the ſons of a tradeſman, and threatened to leave them entirely to the direction of their mother. Theſe quarrels which always began with an emulative tenderneſs for the children, ended with ſevere reproaches on the part of madame de Monteſpan, and on that of madame Scaron with deſigns and ſchemes for quitting the court. The mother alledged that no one had a right to oppoſe her in the education of her own children. The governeſs anſwered 'that 'they were the king's, and, ſince their legi-'timation, the children of France.'

Madame de Monteſpan revenged herſelf on madame Scaron, for this oppoſition to her will, by excluding her from thoſe private parties with the king, to which ſhe had at firſt introduced her: madame Scaron more concerned at the effects of her reſentment than at her reſentment itſelf, refuſed to go when ſhe was again invited; ſhe thought it ignominious to be the ſport of a woman whom ſhe ſcorned to ſooth. The marchioneſs enraged at the haughty returns ſhe made to her conceſſions, prejudiced the king againſt her, and madame Scaron who was extremely ſenſible of injuries, and naturally paſſionate, ſometimes made herſelf amends, for the painful reſtraint ſhe had obſerved, and gave free courſe to her anger. The miſtreſs complained to the king, the governeſs to the abbé Gobelin,

lin, who obliged her to remain at court, with a hope of procuring a good benefice for himſelf, and a large penſion for her.

Theſe two ladies were as quickly reconciled as ſet at variance, they were not able either to live together or to part: madame Scaron inſiſted that the marchioneſs ſhould treat her, if not as her equal, at leaſt as her friend: the marchioneſs would ſometimes, in the warmth of confidence, lay her dignity aſide; at other times ſhe would make madame Scaron ſenſible of the immenſe diſtance there was between her who gave birth to princes, and her who educated them.

The king weary at length of theſe continual diſputes ſaid to madame de Monteſpan, 'if ſhe diſpleaſes you, why do 'you not diſmiſs her, are you not the 'miſtreſs?' The marchioneſs thought it leſs difficult to appeaſe madame Scaron than to find another fit for her place, but ſhe took care to let her know that the king had left her at liberty to revenge herſelf as ſhe pleaſed. Madame Scaron deeply wounded at a ſpeech which ſubjected her to the tyranny of another, declared in plain terms that ſhe would retire from court. Her friends earneſtly intreated her not to fly the fortune that awaited her, madame de Monteſpan alarmed

med at her ſteadineſs, prevailed upon the families of Albret and Richelieu to uſe every motive the intereſt and happineſs of their friend could ſuggeſt to engage her to ſtay, but all their endeavours were fruitleſs, the king had affronted her, the king muſt give her ſatisfaction; ſhe yielded to his intreaties and promiſed to go to Barege with the duke du Maine.

The king began to entertain ſentiments of the higheſt reſpect and eſteem for a woman, who would acknowledge a dependance upon none but himſelf; he no longer dreaded the converſation of the *wit*, he delivered her from the yoke which the marchioneſs had impoſed upon her, and would not ſuffer her to render an account of the princes education to any other but himſelf; in theſe interviews he found her ſo aimable, ſo ſenſible and unaffected, that his former prejudices were entirely eraſed.

Thus did madame Scaron make her way inſenſibly to the king's heart. Some will have it that the affection of Lewis for her was ſuddenly and by chance entertained. This ancedote may be found every where, and ſhould not have a place here but to be refuted.

The king happening once to put one of thoſe tender queſtions to madame de Monteſpan

Monteſpan which ſuppoſe that a Prince may be loved for himſelf, but can never be ſure of it, the favourite anſwered him as all women anſwer their lovers. The king quitted her, ſaying with ſome appearance of diſcontent, that ſhe confounded ambition with love. Madame de Monteſpan, alarmed at an expreſſion which inſinuated a doubt of her ſincerity, would not ſuffer the king to ſleep upon ſo dangerous a notion; ſhe wrote to him in order to undeceive him, but not being ſatisfied with her letter, ſhe had recourſe to madame Scaron, who immediately compoſed one for her with ſuch propriety of thought and expreſſion, that madame de Monteſpan, quite charmed with it, copied and ſent it to the king. Lewis was in raptures, he beſtowed ſo many praiſes upon it, that madame Monteſpan, aſhamed of taking to herſelf the merit of another, confeſſed that ſhe had borrowed the pen of madame Scaron. The king was concerned to find that his miſtreſs had been obliged to have recourſe to another hand to aſſure him that ſhe loved him, he deſired to ſee the perſon who was capable of writing ſo well, the eaſy and elegant converſation of madame Scaron anſwered the idea her letters had given him of her wit, and his prejudices againſt her vaniſhed that moment *. This ſtory was certainly the invention

* See madame du Noyer's letters, deſpiſed, and yet oppoſed

invention of ſome perſon who was not acquainted either with the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, or madame Scaron.

Madame de Monteſpan did not need to borrow the pen of any other perſon, ſhe wrote with a ſpirit like that of the marchioneſs de Sévigné, and if ſhe had not the ſtyle of her family, love had given her his own. Madame Scaron declared ſo poſitively againſt every thing that had the appearance of gallantry, that it was not at all probable ſhe would deſcend to ſo faulty a compliance. Wit indeed readily aſſumes the appearance of every paſſion, as it becomes every ſituation, but the piety which ſhe made profeſſion of would not admit of ſuch a diſguiſe.

Madame Scaron ſuffered enough from the neceſſity which obliged her to conceal her contempt for the marchioneſs de Monteſpan; ſhe thought by accepting invitations to the entertainments ſhe gave the king, that ſhe aſſociated herſelf in her rimes, although her confeſſor declared, that one may without offending God live with thoſe who daily offend him.

oppoſed by all the hiſtorians. Gayot de Pitaval, author of the *biblioteque des gens de cour*, gives us this ſuppoſed letter, wrote by madame Scaron for the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, he does not tell us from whence he had it, but the ſtyle of it proves that it is his own compoſition.

Her

Her behaviour was ſo well calculated to inſpire reſpect and eſteem, that the king diverting himſelf one day in the country with drawing the ladies chairs from under them, paſſed by madame Scaron, ſaying: 'I dare not be ſo free with 'her.

She often earneſtly intreated madame de Monteſpan to break off all correſpondence with the king. The marchioneſs promiſed every thing ſhe required, would be reſerved and cruel for a whole month, and ſeemed to relinquiſh the ſin for a time, only to return to it with higher taſte.

She would ſometimes torment madame Scaron with all the inſolent capriciouſneſs of her temper, to puniſh her for a virtue which ſeemed tacitly to reproach her frailty: in an old woman ſhe could have pardoned advice and examples, which became inſults in one who was but five years older than herſelf, who had leſs beauty indeed, but as many graces, and more wit.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan concealed her irregularities with as much care, as madame Scaron her advancement in piety; the marchioneſs dreaded even her looks; ſhe once wrote a billet to madame Scaron

Scaron beſeeching her to come and ſee her, ſhe was then lying-in, and added theſe words: 'I am very deſirous of 'ſeeing you, tho' I dread your preſence. 'I intreat you for God's ſake do not roll 'your large black eyes upon me in the 'condition I now am.'

To ſoften the ſeverity of a virtue which was continually importuning her with reproofs, and admonitions, ſhe performed ſome acts of charity that were recommended to her by madame Scaron. She protected the community of ſaint Joſeph, but there was ſo much avarice mingled with her benefactions, that it was eaſily ſeen ſhe feared madame Scaron more than ſhe loved the poor: ſhe gave to a certain church a golden lamp, but it was ſo light that madame Scaron bluſhed when ſhe preſented it, and there was a neceſſity for filling it with ſand that it might not vibrate with the air.

One day when madame Scaron went to church with the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, ſhe ſaw her enter a confeſſionary, and entertained hopes of her converſion; ſhe was fully convinced her wiſhes were anſwered, when ſhe obſerved the penitent to hear maſs with the deepeſt attention and ſeeming advantage, and that ſhe received the communion with fervour. When they

they came out of the church, madame Scaron expreſſed great joy at her ſincere return to God: madame de Monteſpan, without anſwering her, ordered her coachman gayly to carry her to Verſailles. 'Is it poſſible, ſaid madame Scaron, that 'you who have juſt received your creator, 'will go and throw yourſelf into the arms 'of a man? Ah! madame, at leaſt fear 'the devil, if you do not love God.' Madame de Monteſpan ſighed, but did not alter her reſolution.

She ſought to deceive herſelf by practiſing thoſe duties of religion which derive their chief merit from a uniform life of holineſs. She valued herſelf upon being extremely regular in the exerciſes preſcribed by the church. On faſt days ſhe would have the bread ſhe eat weighed, that it might not exceed a certain quantity. Madame Scaron laughed at this ſolicitude about trifles. 'Do you believe, ſaid 'madame de Monteſpan to her, that be'cauſe I commit one ſin I will be guilty 'of all? Father Feuillet * would have an'ſwered, Madam, eat beef and be a chri'ſtian.'

* Confeſſor to the dutcheſs of Orleans.

CHAPTER IV.

The dutcheſs de la Valliere *turns Carmelite.*

MADAME de la Valliere no longer expected to regain a heart which was confirmed by time in indifference: ſhe now thought only of atoning for ſins, which happily for her ſalvation, ſhe could no more commit. Every day, for many anxious months, ſhe had curſed that court where her honour, her peace, had been loſt, yet had not power to leave it. The deſire of ſeeing her children ſettled, the pleaſure of ſtill beholding the prince, to whom ſhe had ſacrificed all, or perhaps ſome remains of hope, had retained her.

The count de Lauzun would have married her, ſhe diſmiſſed him with indignation: the duke de Longueville was in love with her, ſhe forbid him even to hope: ſhe thought that God alone ought to fill that place in her heart which the king had ſo long poſſeſſed. In her, all was to be uncommon, all worthy of admiration, no woman had ever loved with more delicacy, no one ever puniſhed herſelf more ſeverely for having loved; madame de la Valliere was formed to be a model for the miſtreſſes of kings.

A pious friar receiving one day a conſiderable ſum of money from her, for a very uſeful eſtabliſhment, ſaid to her, 'Madam, you are ſo charitable, that God 'will certainly have pity on you; you 'have given ſcandal to the world, you 'will one day edify it.' Although theſe words awakened her remorſe, yet they gave her joy, and God, who at firſt ſeemed but to ſlightly touch her heart, rewarded her obedience to theſe faint motions of his grace, by giving them, at length, power enough to triumph over all the allurements of ſin.

She left St. Germains privately, and ſhut herſelf up in Chaillot, from whence ſhe wrote a letter to the king, ſuch as paſſion, deſpair, and piety dictated. She employed the marſhal de Bellefonds to deliver this letter to the king, intreating him to tell his majeſty, that after having loſt his heart, ſhe would have quitted the court if ſhe could have prevailed upon herſelf to live without ſeeing him; that ſhe had been long influenced by that fatal weakneſs, and had, with great difficulty, taken a reſolution to make a ſacrifice of herſelf to God; that the remains of her paſſion ſhould ſerve to heighten her penitence, and that after having given him her youth, the reſt of her life was not too much to be ſpent in the care of her ſalvation.

The king was greatly affected with this letter, he ſent monſieur Colbert to her at Chaillot, with an earneſt requeſt that ſhe would inſtantly return; ſhe obeyed; madame de Monteſpan came to meet her with open arms, and eyes bathed in tears.

The dutcheſs de la Valliere tenderly embraced her rival, and conjured her to permit the king to be innocent. Lewis talked to her an hour in private, approved of her deſign, but intreated her to put off the execution of it till another time, and came out of his cloſet, with his eyes ſtill wet with tears. Madame de la Valliere declared to him that ſhe was abſolutely reſolved to retire from the world: 'I know 'my own heart, ſaid ſhe, I doubt its 'firmneſs, it is neceſſary it ſhould be ſub-'jected to a voluntary ſlavery, it is the 'beſt uſe it can make of freedom.'

The king repreſented to her the conſequences of a perpetual engagement, the delicacy of her conſtitution, and that her charity could be more extenſive in the world than in a cloiſter. 'I have taken 'my reſolution too late for my honour, 'anſwered ſhe, but I flatter myſelf it is 'not too late for my ſalvation.'

Lewis endeavoured to perſuade her, ſince he could gain nothing elſe, to chuſe an

an order leſs auſtere than that ſhe had fixed upon, or elſe that ſhe would exerciſe her virtues in the government of a religious community. 'Alas! anſwered ſhe, ſigh-'ing, can I, who have loſt myſelf, be 'capable of guiding others?

The courtiers aſſigned a very different motive for the frequent journeys of the dutcheſs to Chaillot. They ſuſpected that ſhe was making uſe of all the arts of a refined coquettry, either to regain the king's heart, or to gratify her revenge by diſengaging him at leaſt from madame de Monteſpan; but they were deceived: religion was in full poſſeſſion of her ſoul, and ſhe had abſolutely determined to take the veil. One day, when the king was gone to the chace, ſhe opened her mind freely to madame Scaron, as one whom ſhe thought the beſt qualified to judge candidly of a reſolution, which is oftener ſuggeſted by deſpair, than produced by repentance.

Madame Scaron trembled at the mention of turning Carmelite. 'It is a deſign, re-'ſumed the dutcheſs, that I have long 'entertained, and to prepare myſelf for 'the auſterities of the order I am re-'ſolved to enter into, I wear conſtantly a 'ſhift of hair: one can never ſufficiently

'expiate the crime of having loved too 'well.'

Madame Scaron conjured her to examine herſelf well, ſhe ſhewed her all the conſequences of taking ſuch a dangerous ſtep: 'How can you, ſaid ſhe to madame de la 'Valliere, who from your infancy have 'been accuſtomed to luxury and pleaſures, 'ſupport the auſtere life of a Carmelite? 'Ah! madam, replied the dutcheſs, 'pointing to the king and madame de 'Monteſpan, who were juſt returned, I 'need only recall to my remembrance the 'affliction thoſe two perſons have given 'me, to make me ſuffer all others with 'patience.'

Madame de la Valliere executed this deſign with all the magnanimity of a hero: the whole court would be witneſs of the ſacrifice, the queen herſelf was preſent at it. The victim never appeared more lovely than in the inſtant when ſhe was immolated: her beauty ſurpriſed all who beheld her: the ſermon, preached by monſieur Boſſuet upon that occaſion, ſurpriſed no one; the courtiers burſt into tears; madame de la Valliere pronounced the vows which ſecluded her for ever from the world, with the ſame graces, the ſame ardor, the ſame ſerenity with which ſhe had a thouſand times ſwore to Lewis an eternal love.

From

From that moment ſhe ſuffered no regret for the world ſhe had quitted to diſturb her repoſe; ſhe breathed not a ſigh for the prince ſhe had ſo fervently loved; ſhe wept only for her ſins, and loved nothing but God; ſhe paraphraſed that beautiful pſalm in which David deplores ſins of a more criminal nature; the ſentiments of faith, of love, of contrition, expreſſed by this penitent monarch, were greatly below thoſe which the ſad remembrance of her frailty, more excuſable than that of Bathſheba, inſpired. She paſſed five and thirty years in theſe auſterities, under the name of ſiſter Louiſa of the houſe of Mercy, greater in the eyes of the devout, and even in thoſe of the king, in her penitential habit in humiliation, at the feet of the altar, than when ſeated near the throne, ſhe ſaw a croud of mercenary flatterers tremble at her looks. Her pleaſures had made up all her affliction, her ſufferings made all her joy. *

* She entered her noviciate June 2d, 1674. took the veil June 4th, 1675. and died June 6th, 1710. She gave all her eſtates to Mary Anne of Bourbon her daughter, born at Vincennes October 2d, 1666, legitimated in 1667, married January 16th, 1680, to Lewis Armand, prince of Conti, who died without iſſue in 1685, the princeſs died in 1739. The princeſs of Conti gave the dutchy of Vaujour to the marquis de la Valliere her uncle. Madame de la Valliere had three ſons, one died July

The anxiety of a mother interrupted the tranquility of her retreat. The count de Vermandois her ſon, whom Lewis loved with the fondeſt affection, had ſuffered himſelf to be corrupted by his paraſites and favourites, and carried away by the firſt paſſions of youth, thought every thing was permitted to him. His behaviour had all the haughtineſs of a prince, his conduct all the diſſoluteneſs of the moſt abandoned profligate: being diſcovered in ſome ſhameful exceſſes, he received a command from the king not to appear before him, his domeſticks were all diſmiſſed, and he was confined to his apartment, not ſuffered to ſee any perſon whatever, or to go any where but to the academy, or to hear maſs. Siſter Louiſa could not hear of theſe diſorders without being pierced with grief. Great pains were taken with the prince to bring him to a ſenſe of his faults, he made a general confeſſion, appeared very devout, but was not reformed.

1683. The king however pardoned him all; the count de Vermandois attended him to the ſiege of Courtray, he gave proofs

July 15th, 1666, before he was legitimated, and was interred at St. Euſtache: the other, ſays the princeſs de Montpenſier in her memoirs, thought his mother had been ſtruck with lightening, and died of the fright: the third was the count de Vermandois, admiral of France.

of

of uncommon courage, gained the hearts of the ſoldiers by his liberality, and excited the jealouſy of the dauphin, with whom he quarrelled frequently. This, ſays the princeſs de Montpenſier in her memoirs, is one of thoſe hiſtories which we can know but imperfectly, and which is generally concealed with great care. It was given out in the camp, that the count de Vermandois died in the night, ſome ſaid of a malignant fever, ſome of the ſmall pox, and by others it was reported, that his death was occaſioned by having drank too large a quantity of Aquavitæ. *Nov.* 18.

The body of the count de Vermandois was tranſported to Arras and interred without any pomp in the cathedral church. But very early in the morning a litter was ſeen to come out of the camp, which carried, it was ſaid, the military cheſt: this litter took a bye road, and it was believed conveyed a priſoner of great conſequence. *Nov.* 26.

Madame de la Valliere was informed of her ſon's death by monſieur Boſſuet. 'Muſt I then, ſaid ſhe, lament the death 'of a ſon, whoſe birth I have not yet 'ceaſed to weep for?' His underſtanding and his conduct, according to the princeſs de Montpenſier, were differently repreſented, but it appears by all the memoirs

of that time that no one doubted of his death.

The author of the *ſecret memoirs of Perſia*, a book which is equally filled with truths and falſehood, relates as a certainty, that the count de Vermandois was fifteen years before conducted privately to the Baſtile, with his face covered with an iron maſque. Monſieur de Voltaire has ſince related this fact with ſeveral circumſtances that do not greatly differ from thoſe of the firſt author, and which ſeems to remove all doubt, that this priſoner was the count de Vermandois.

All I have been able to collect from the enquiries I have made into this uncommon incident, is that in reality there was a ſtate priſoner in the Baſtile, who always wore an iron maſque, his perſon tall and well made, his age about fifty. That before he was brought to the Baſtile he had been confined in Pignerol, and in the iſles of St. Margeret; that he died September 1703, and was interred in Saint Paul's church; and that ſome years afterwards a Vault in the church of Courtray being opened, a coffin was found in it filled with ſand*. It is indeed aſtoniſhing, that a fact

* It is obſervable that almoſt all the hiſtorians ſay that the body of the Count de Vermandois was carried to Arras.

which

which muſt have been known to ſo many perſons, and ſuſpected by many more, ſhould be at preſent not only a ſecret, but almoſt a problem.

CHAPTER V.

The purchaſe of Maintenon.

MADAME Scaron perceived that ſhe became every day more agreeable to the king, and was every day more hated by the marchioneſs de Monteſpan; but her happineſs was momentary, her uneaſineſs of long continuance. Madame de Monteſpan would ſhut herſelf up with her in her own apartment, and be inacceſſible to every other perſon, that ſhe might give free courſe to the ſpleen with which ſhe was devoured. If madame Scaron, to avoid theſe diſagreeable converſations, pretended indiſpoſition or buſineſs, her excuſes were not admitted; madame Monteſpan would neither allow her to be ſick, or to be devout.

Madame Scaron thus ſubjected to continual uneaſineſs, which pride without doubt augmented, having no perſon in whom ſhe could confide but the abbé Gobelin, from whom ſhe received conſolations al-

moſt as ſad as the grievances ſhe lamented, ſhe was a thouſand times tempted to appeal to the king: her gratitude, her delicacy would not permit her to complain of her friend, ſhe therefore ſometimes entertained a deſign of purchaſing an eſtate, and ſometimes of throwing herſelf into a convent, but to day the conſideration of her age, and the ſmallneſs of her fortune, to morrow an obliging ſpeech from the king, or an inſtance of confidence and friendſhip in the favourite, always ſome reflexion, or ſome incident, came in the way to diſconcert her ſchemes. Struggling inceſſantly with oppoſite deſires, in the tumult of the world, ſhe ſighed for a convent; in the ſilence of ſolitude, ſhe languiſhed for the pleaſures of the court.

That languor, that reſtleſneſs which followed her every where, that propenſity to deſpiſe all ſhe poſſeſſed, and eager deſire for every thing ſhe had not, thoſe inquietudes, that impetuoſity, which no one obſerved, but which ſhe ſo often diſcovered in herſelf, convinced her that God alone could fill the vacuity in the heart of his creature. Incapable of enjoying proſperity, ſhe was never to be ſatisfied: a ſprightlineſs often forced; but which always ſeemed eaſy and natural, made her appear agreeable at the expence of her heart which was continually rebelling, and was continually ſubdued

dued. The misfortune of being the moſt diſcontented woman in the court, was recompenſed by the glory of being the moſt pleaſing.

Her anxious ſolicitude for the duke du Maine increaſed in proportion as the time drew near, when he was to be taken out of her hands. The king going one day into his children's apartment, found madame Scaron alone with them, ſupporting the duke du Maine who was ill of a fever with one hand, with the other rocking mademoiſelle de Nantes who lay in a cradle, and the count de Vexin ſleeping upon her knees. The women attendants had all ſunk under the fatigue, madame Scaron had watched three nights ſucceſſively, with theſe ſick children, yet ſtill thought ſhe had not done enough. The king ſent her immediately an hundred thouſand francs.

This new benefaction could not fix her in the court, ſhe remained firm in her reſolutions to leave it, but her delicacy ſtill ſuggeſted new cauſe of delay, ſhe dreaded that the king would ſuſpect her of a mercenary, or artificial zeal, in the ſervice of his children, ſhe was afraid of embroiling herſelf with madame de Monteſpan, whom the publick would conſider as the firſt ſource of the king's liberality towards her. However madame Scaron had at

leaſt

leaſt the ſatisfaction of declaring with truth, that madame de Monteſpan was neither her miſtreſs or benefactreſs.

Although ſhe was only retained by her deſire of pleaſing the king, her chains were not leſs heavy for being voluntary; ſhe had ſought a ſecurity againſt ſlavery, and ſhe found only a ſlavery more confirmed. Having reſolved to purchaſe an eſtate either to live upon it in freedom, or to take a name from it, for that of Surgeres which ſhe had born during her journey to Antwerp, had increaſed her averſion for her own, ſhe treated for the fief of d'Aubigné in Anjou, the firſt inheritance of her anceſtors. The lands of Maintenon were propoſed to her, a noble and fine eſtate, a magnificent caſtle, in a moſt beautiful country, at the extremity of a large town and not more than fourteen leagues diſtance from Paris, and ten from Verſailles. The ſituation tempted her, and the bargain was concluded for two hundred and fifty thouſand livres.*

The lands of Maintenon produced only nine or ten thouſand livres a year, but madame Scaron carried thither that ſpirit of method and economy which ſhe had acquired in poverty, ſhe prevailed upon ſome flemiſh artiſts to form there manufactures of lace,

* December 27, 1674.

and

and ſettled Normans upon her lands whoſe buſineſs was to make linnen cloath. By theſe uſeful eſtabliſhments, ſhe increaſed the revenue of her eſtate, to fifteen or ſixteen thouſand livres. Upon her firſt taking poſſeſſion of it, ſhe ſaid, 'Here will I 'die.' This was the only eſtate ſhe ever poſſeſſed, in a heighth of favour, that afforded her the means of purchaſing immenſe ones.

This lordſhip * had formerly belonged to the family of Angennes. The marchioneſs de Maintenon, being importuned by her creditors, went to Martinico, made eſtabliſhments there, and ended her days in the very houſe from whence madame Scaron came to purchaſe her eſtate.

Thoſe few leiſure hours with which the king or the marchioneſs de Monteſpan indulged madame Scaron, were employed in viewing Maintenon, and planning improvements there: ſhe embelliſhed the caſtle, ſhe eſtabliſhed ſchools, but ſhe was particularly ſolicitous to form manufactures, and render hoſpitals unneceſſary, ſince all the poor might find ſufficient employment

* It was erected into a marquiſate, and peerage in 1688, and now belongs to the houſe of Noailles, and produces with the acquiſitions, that have been ſince made, fifty thouſand livres a year: it is entailed upon the community of St. Cyr.

in

in them. She looked upon all her vaſſals as her children, ſhe often remitted thoſe injurious claims, which force and length of time have conſecrated to juſtice, her ſteward in one of his letters to her, expreſſes himſelf thus. 'It muſt be acknowledged, 'madam, that for a woman of wit, you 'are very ſimple.'

Her extreme eagerneſs to improve her eſtate was often oppoſed, and her deſigns delayed: ſhe carried on works there, but could not obtain a ſingle day to go and give her orders concerning them. The king, intoxicated with the charms of her converſation, often ſpent whole hours in private with her, and the marchioneſs de Monteſpan. Sometimes he would ſubmit the little diſputes he had with his miſtreſs to her arbitration. 'Your majeſty is to 'blame in this caſe, ſaid ſhe to him, one 'day with a graceful frankneſs, but there is 'nothing to hinder you from being always 'in the right.' Madame de Monteſpan looked on her with ſurpriſe and anger. 'Certainly, madam, added madame Sca-'ron, if the king is willing to reform, you 'ought not to hinder him.'

Feb. 4. 1675. The king perceiving her to be greatly pleaſed with the acquiſition of her eſtate, called her publickly madame de Maintenon. By ſome it was imagined that this change

change of name had been concerted between the king and her. Her friends reproached her with deſpiſing the name of her huſband. Her enemies reported that ſhe was wholly taken up with trifles and her new grandeur. 'She muſt then, ſays 'madame de Sevigné in one of her letters, 'be greatly altered.'

She was ſometimes in whiſpers called madame de *Maintenant*; but conſcious of the innocence and rectitude of her own heart, ſhe ſeemed to be innocent of the malicious cenſures of the publick, and now ſigned *Maintenon*: hitherto ſhe had always ſigned d'Aubigné.

This change of name was of greater uſe to her than ſhe herſelf could have foreſeen. How could ſhe have raiſed herſelf to the rank ſhe was afterwards ſeen in, with the name of Scaron, which always preſented the king with a mean and burleſque idea? How could the great, the awful Lewis have required the reſpect and veneration of his ſubjects for a woman whoſe name itſelf was a jeſt. All the reſerve, the dignity of the widow could not efface the impreſſion made by the remembrance of the burleſque huſband. It was neceſſary therefore that madame de Maintenon ſhould make madame Scaron be forgot.

End of the FIFTH BOOK.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

The retrait of Madame de Monteſpan.

THE enſuing lent produced a ſurpriſing revolution in the court. The king reſolved to paſs it at the ancient caſtle of Verſailles, that he might more regularly attend the ſermons, of which however he was not yet willing to profit. He gave orders to the archbiſhop of Paris to ſend him for the offices of the holy week ſome prieſts of the congregation of the miſſion, that he might make trial of a body to which he intended to give the care of the pariſh of Verſailles.

Theſe miſſionaries performed their duty like men who had never before been at court. The preachers alarmed all the conſciences

conſciences of their hearers, and the rigid confeſſors, did not contribute to eaſe them. The marchioneſs de Monteſpan was racked with remorſe, and the king appeared in the queen's apartment with the eyes of a man who had been weeping, and was not ſorry to have it thought ſo.

Madame d'Hudicourt had returned to Verſailles to ſee what effect the ſermon upon forgiveneſs of injuries would produce. The favourite permitted her preſence there, madame de Maintenon had embraced her, the whole court was ſurpriſed at this apparition. Impelled by the ſecret workings of Grace, or influenced by the prevailing taſte of the court, madame d'Hudicourt began to be religious, and had reformed her conduct, her dreſs, and her converſation. Madame de Monteſpan renewed her former intimacy with her, that ſhe might have a tractable devotee to oppoſe to the inflexible madame de Maintenon. The marchioneſs ſtill trembled, leſt the king ſhould, through his ſcruples, eſcape her, and endeavoured to leſſen his apprehenſions of the power of her charms, and the publick cenſure, by admitting to her ſociety an old friend, whoſe fervent piety would, ſhe hoped, perſuade the court that their converſation turned wholly upon God in thoſe meetings

before

before Lent, which were calculated only to offend him.

This artifice proved fruitleſs, although madame d'Hudicourt aſſiſted it with all the ready condeſcenſion of a hypocrite: madame de Monteſpan endeavoured to hinder divine grace from acting upon the ſoul of Lewis, and it acted upon her own; ſhe was afraid of being abandoned by her lover, and ſhe abandoned him.

Among the women of her chamber there was one, whoſe ſecrecy and condeſcenſion, the lovers were ſo well convinced of, that in her preſence they reſigned themſelves up to all the freedom of a private interview. This woman terrified at the judgments of God ſo awfully denounced againſt ſinners, thought herſelf anſwerable for all the impurities ſhe had been a witneſs to; ſhe went to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, whoſe admonitions ſhe had always deſpiſed, and there exclaimed againſt the marchioneſs de Monteſpan and herſelf with all the bitterneſs of deſpair. She accuſed herſelf with having ruined the king who was ruſhing upon his damnation, and of being the cauſe of all the miſeries with which the wrath of heaven now threatened the kingdom. A thouſand times in the agonies of her guilty conſcience, ſhe cried out

out that there was no longer any pardon, or ſalvation for her, that her only reſource againſt the horrors of her mind was to hang or drown herſelf; and then ran into a ſhocking detail of all the looſe ſcenes ſhe had been a witneſs to.

Madame de Maintenon interrupted this impure confidence, and endeavoured to calm the agitation of the unhappy wretch. In vain ſhe aſſured her that God was more merciful than ſhe had been guilty; the woman, ſo much the more tormented by remorſe as ſhe had hitherto ſlighted the warnings of her conſcience, ſtill exclaimed that ſhe ſaw hell opened beneath her feet. 'I only, ſaid ſhe, am the 'cauſe of all: but you, madam, you who 'are ſo virtuous, ſo holy, would do better 'to ſtrangle theſe baſtards, than to educate them.'

Madame de Maintenon prevailed upon this mad wretch not to hang herſelf till ſhe had ſeen monſieur Lécuyer, a miſſionary who drew ſinners to repentance, by repreſenting the ſupreme Being full of mercy and goodneſs, while others took delight in painting him always armed with thunder. This pious prieſt reſtored her to reaſon, and after leading her from deſpair to repentance, from repentance to hope, he ſent her back to the confeſſionary, bathed in tears, ſtriking

ſtriking her breaſt, and giving every indication of ſincere contrition. She went to the marchioneſs and demanded to be diſmiſſed from her ſervice, returned to her with ſome remains of wildneſs all the preſents ſhe had received from her and the king, rejected her promiſes with indignation, told her that ſhe was reſolved to live no longer in wickedneſs, conjured the marchioneſs to repent, and talked to her with that ſuperiority which a ſoul ſure of being in favour with its God, has over a woman who is only in favour with her king.

Madame de Monteſpan, now delivered up to her own ſad reflexions, terrified at the dreadful ſentence which decrees, that a few moments of guilty pleaſure ſhall be puniſhed with an eternity of torments, hurried on by example which made ſo many proſelytes, weary of acting the part of a miſtreſs ſo humiliating during the eaſter holidays, found herſelf in that ſtate when the heart is ready to yield to the firſt ſentiment which attacks it with violence. She reſolved that this confeſſor, whoſe pathetick powers produced ſuch dreadful conviction, ſhould draw her out of her uncertainty, either by augmenting her terror, or by giving her hope of an eaſy pardon. Accordingly ſhe ſent an order to monſieur Lécuyer to attend the next day

at

at her confeſſionary. The prieſt greatly ſurprized at ſo peremptory a meſſage was fully determined to teach this inſolent penitent to reſpect the miniſters of the Lord.

Late in the evening on Aſh-Wedneſday, madame de Monteſpan, accompanied by madame de Maintenon went in the coach of the latter, without any attendants and with the greateſt privacy, to the church where monſieur Lécuyer waited for her: all theſe precautions were taken to prevent the cenſures this act of religion might have occaſioned, ſince if publickly known it would have been conſidered as an introduction to ſacrilege, or as an artifice of hypocriſy: ſuch is the miſerable ſtate of habitual vice, that in her even a good action became a crime.

Madame de Monteſpan came out of church diſſolved in tears, ſhe ſent immediately for monſieur Boſſuet, then preceptor to the Dauphin, and biſhop of Condom; ſhe related to him all that had paſſed, acknowledged that the miſſionary had filled her with horror at her ſituation, and had ſo terrified her by his denunciations of divine vengeance, that ſhe was firmly reſolved to leave the court, and employ the remaining part of her life in penitence for the ſins of the paſt, and intreated him to acquaint the king with her intention.

Monſieur

Monſieur Boſſuet approved of her deſign, exaggerated the fame it would procure her with the world, the merit it would have with God, and promiſed that he would prevail upon the king not to oppoſe it.

As he was returning from the apartment of madame de Monteſpan, he met madame de Maintenon, and related to her the miracles which had been wrought by monſieur Lécuyer. 'But do you, my lord, 'ſaid madame de Maintenon; do you, 'who are ſo well acquainted with the 'human heart, believe that this vapour of 'devotion will laſt long? I cannot be 'ſure of that, replied the biſhop, but 'however there will be ſome weeks gained 'by it, and fewer ſins will be committed. 'Ah! my lord, replied madame de Main-'tenon, it is not the body that offends 'God, it is the will.'

As ſoon as the marchioneſs ſaw her enter her apartment ſhe ran to her eagerly, and embracing her, ſaid, 'At length you 'ſhall be ſatisfied with me, I am going 'from this place, to-morrow I will quit 'it, without giving, without receiving 'any farewell, and almoſt without any 'regret.'

An ordinary devotee would have ſeemed to approve of this ſcheme, and eluded the execution

execution of it, would have been inceſſantly reproving the miſtreſs through oſtentation, and have favoured her amours through intereſt. But madame de Maintenon, whoſe fortune was ſtill connected with that of madame de Monteſpan, ſhewed, by the advice ſhe gave her, which was always equal and firm, that her averſion to the court was ſincere, that her attachment to the king was diſintereſted, and her indifference to that favour which ſhe acquired by virtues, for which others have loſt it, was as undiſſembled as it was great.

She confirmed madame de Monteſpan in her reſolution, and would not leave her the whole night, either becauſe ſhe hoped to diſingage her entirely from the king, by arguments founded on the principles of religion, or to fix her in her deſign, by urging every motive that honour, and the deſire of regaining the world's eſteem could ſuggeſt.

The marchioneſs wept: madame de Maintenon, by whom theſe tears were ſuſpected, looked earneſtly upon her, and made her bluſh. She aſſured her ſhe would ſtill continue with her, and exhorted her to implore of God perſeverance and fortitude, to compleat this ſacrifice, which at one time ſeemed ſmall and eaſy,

at another, difficult and great, according to the different emotions of the uncertain heart ſhe endeavoured to ſubdue.

Thoſe who were well acquainted with the character of madame de Maintenon, could neither ſuſpect her of diſſimulation, of regretting the loſs of that favour ſhe poſſeſſed at court, or of ſubmitting to circumſtances with only ſeeming fortitude. Her friends often complained that they could never perſuade this antique virtue, that ſuch a commerce as that of the king and madame de Monteſpan, was of no conſequence to the glory of the prince, was pardonable in the lady, and was uſeful to the people; and the marchioneſs herſelf had often upbraided her with making one in her little parties with the king, not ſo much to enliven the converſation by the charms of her wit, as to diſguſt them with guilt, by the allurements of virtuous pleaſures, or to keep them in reſtraint by the preſence of a rigid, tho' never melancholy virtue.

The abbé Gobelin, who poſſeſſed her entire confidence, knew how often ſhe had been afflicted for the moſt innocent compliances, and that ſhe paid twenty prieſts to remember every day in their prayers at the altar, the offending king, and his no leſs guilty miſtreſs.

In

In thoſe times, the virtuous and the holy formed leagues of piety againſt the miſtreſſes of their king. They attributed to the efficacy of their prayers the converſion of the dutcheſs de la Valliere, and aſpired to the glory of triumphing alſo over madame de Monteſpan, who had a greater ſhare in it than they had, and whoſe perpetual infancy long ſported with all their ſchemes.

The virgins of the Lord dedicated to him their chaſtity, in hopes of obtaining the baniſhment of the adultereſs. The preſumptuous devotees, ſolicitous about every ſin but their own, puniſhed themſelves with ſhifts and girdles of hair for faults they had not committed, with all the ſeverity of that pride which ſeeks to expiate the crimes of another. Some made long pilgrimages, others beſtowed alms in great abundance; in all places there was faſting, praying, voluntary diſcipline, and ſevere penances, and this not to obtain of heaven that the king of France ſhould leave his neighbours in peace, ſhould ſubmit to the laws, ſhould reſtore in compliance with the remonſtrances of his parliaments, their rights of ſuſpenſion, but that he ſhould ceaſe to love a woman.

Some ſuppoſing that the prayers of the new world were more acceptable to God than thoſe of the old, cauſed a propitiatory

ſacrifice to be offered at Quebec, for the ſins committed at Paris. Other nations attack the miſtreſſes of their princes by curſes and rebellions, the French alone, by epigrams and prayers: and indeed our kings never hear of their ſubjects murmurs without receiving at the ſame time, proofs of their affection.

Monſieur Boſſuet went directly to the king, and told him that madame de Monteſpan, who had ſo often complained of the ſeverity of confeſſors, would ſoon complain of their indulgence; that ſhe had now decided herſelf (what the caſuiſts had been baſe enough to leave in doubt) that her firſt duty was to quit the court, that ſhe conjured him not to oppoſe her deſign, but to forget her, and above all not to make any more attempts upon a heart which grace had touched, but not entirely ſubdued.

Boſſuet had acquired great influence over Lewis, as well by his ſucceſs in the education of his ſon, as by his zeal for the converſion of hereticks. He was one of thoſe men ſo rarely to be met with, whoſe fame was not leſſened by his appearance: he had always the air and manner of a meſſenger from the living God.

The king, ſurpriſed and afflicted at the ſudden retreat of madame de Monteſpan, let

let fall ſome tears. The biſhop affected to take this tender emotion for an effort of his great ſoul to redeem itſelf from ſlavery; he repreſented to him that his irregular conduct was fatal to the manners of his people, and would be the ruin of religion. 'Ah! Sire, he added, what an 'example do you give the prince, what 'effect can my leſſons have upon a ſon 'who ſees his father living in a publick 'adultery, the queen reduced to that cold 'reſpect which cannot with decency be 'withheld from her, while madame de 'Monteſpan is adored, virtue every where 'deſpiſed, the miniſters of your paſſions 'more powerful than your miniſters of 'ſtate. The ſalvation of your people is 'in your hands, you are the model of the 'court, the court is the model of the ca-'pital, and the capital of the provinces. 'Your majeſty, always ſure of being imi-'tated, may root out ſin, by ſhewing that 'you hate it.'

The king was ſtruck with theſe truths, and ſighing told the prelate, that he had indeed many errors to reform, that he would leave madame de Monteſpan entirely miſtreſs of herſelf; and that he now only wanted a man who would put him alſo in the way to ſecure his ſalvation.

The biſhop repeated theſe words to madame de Monteſpan, who, after having

feared a denial, was enraged at a conſent ſo eaſily obtained: ſhe would have aſked the prelate, if the king had granted her requeſt without any ſtruggle with himſelf, if he was not ſhocked at her deſign, if he had ſeemed to hope that ſhe would be induced to alter it; but ſhe did not dare to expreſs a criminal curioſity. Forced to conceal her ſentiments, ſhe condemned yet indulged them, ſhe wept for the ſins ſhe had committed, and regretted thoſe ſhe had ſtill hoped to commit: ſhe promiſed her Creator that ſhe would be faithful to him, and repined that the king was inconſtant to her.

Madame de Maintenon, and monſieur Boſſuet looked at each other, aſtoniſhed that vice ſhould yet have ſo many allurements for a heart which had felt the influence of virtue. They both joined to exhort the marchioneſs to perform the vows ſhe had made to God, and being convinced that upon certain occaſions, if good could be produced, it was of little importance by what methods, they ſometimes repreſented the angels as rejoicing at her converſion, ſometimes the world applauding her retreat.

'The vows of madame de la Valliere, 'ſaid they, have been attributed to jealouſy 'and deſpair; your flight will be thought 'the

'the conſequence of returning virtue: the 'king had abandoned Valliere, but it is 'you that abandons the king. After the 'misfortune of having enſlaved him, all 'that now remains for you is the glory of 'renouncing him.' Theſe were powerful arguments with a woman, who, at three and thirty years of age, was ſtill young enough to be relieved from all her uneaſineſs by a little coach of filigreen work, drawn by ſix mice.

This involuntary fervor was diſſipated by ſleep, madame de Monteſpan went to bed converted, and waked a ſinner. Her penitent woman in vain ſolicited her to riſe, ſhe cried it was ſcarcely day, ſhe was exceſſively fatigued, it was an unheard-of cruelty not to leave her one moment in quiet; ſhe breathed deep ſighs, and immediately afterwards cried out, 'Ah, my 'God, how ſincerely will I love thee!'

Madame de Maintenon, who had foreſeen that her departure from the court would be as ſlow as her reſolution to leave it had been precipitate, had given all the neceſſary orders: the ſervants all held themſelves in readineſs, the coach was at the door, there was no pretence for delay. 'My God,' ſaid madame de Monteſpan, looking fixedly upon that bed which recalled to her remembrance ſins which

ſhe would, and yet could not hate, 'muſt 'I then leave this place for ever.' Do 'you do well, madam, ſaid madame de 'Maintenon, to honour it with your re-'gret at parting?'

Reluctantly ſhe permitted her women to dreſs her, already ſhe chid with the peeviſh tone of a devotee, ſhe talked of embelliſhing Fontevrault, but thought it cruel that ſhe was not to ſee the caſtle of Verſailles finiſhed: ſhe interrupted acts of contrition by ſecret complaints againſt that grace which had touched her heart ſo unſeaſonably. She was never more lovely than now, had never been ſo paſſionately beloved, and perhaps never loved with ſo much ardour; yet could ſhe flatter herſelf that the king would continue firm in his reſolutions to correct his errors: but what probability was there that a man, at his age, ſhould love nothing but God? would he not fly to new amours, would he not ſeek women who would grant him the firſt favours without ſcruple, and the following without remorſe? would he not laviſh upon them thoſe honours, thoſe diſtinctions, the loſs of which is regretted more than that of the lover who diſpenſes them. 'Of what 'importance is it to you, ſaid madame de 'Maintenon, that the place of miſtreſs is 'filled up, provided it is not by you?'

Ah!

'Ah! ſaid madame de Monteſpan, it is 'plain you never loved a king, no nor 'even any other man.'

Madame de Monteſpan at length tore herſelf away; madame de Maintenon, at her intreaty, remained at court to give the neceſſary direction for the removal of the princes, whom the mother was now reſolved to educate herſelf.

Mean time the courtiers, as uſual, ſent to enquire the health of the favourite; ſhe is already at Paris, and her apartment at Verſailles is beſieged with a croud of importunate paraſites, who deſire to know how ſhe had paſſed the night; by patrons who had already received half the ſum promiſed, for the ſucceſs of a petition; by inquiſitive friends who, upon the firſt notice of an event, run eagerly to diſcover the myſtery. They are told, with a melancholy accent, that madame de Monteſpan had ſet out precipitately for Paris.

In an inſtant, this ſervile croud who had before wore but one face, and that of reſpect and ſubmiſſion, now had their different thoughts impreſſed upon their countenances; ſome openly ſhewed their ſatisfaction, others diſſembled theirs, theſe affected ſadneſs in hopes of a reconciliation, thoſe concealed their affliction through ſhame at

compaſſionating an exile. Some looked at each other, as if to aſk whether they ought to be ſad or rejoyce; the greater part endeavoured to appear indifferent, yet were afraid that their looks would betray them. All went away in doubt whether they had had prudence enough, or trembling leſt they had ſhewed too much.

As ſoon as it was publickly known that madame de Monteſpan had quitted the court, every one judged of it differently: the favourites attributed her retreat to a love-quarrel, the devotees to the Sermons of Lent; ſome to the king's compliance with popular prejudices. But the courtiers in general to her being abſolutely in diſgrace. They haſtened to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, but from her they could draw nothing but what increaſed their uncertainty, and made them deſirous of knowing more. The dutcheſs de Richelieu, to whom the ſins of her friend had been ſo advantageous, was grieved that ſhe had renounced them. 'She might have 'ſtaid here, ſaid ſhe to madame de Main-'tenon, we would have converted her 'without your Paris expedition, and your 'terrible monſieur Lécuyer.'

This dutcheſs, governed at once by her ambition and the abbé Gobelin, reconciled the dictates of paſſion with the advice

vice of her director, by conjuring the favourite to be no longer guilty, and by contriving meetings between her and Lewis, in which it was impoſſible to avoid being ſo. She would however have been well pleaſed that the king ſhould have a miſtreſs, of whom he could not always be the maſter.

Madame de Maintenon reproved her for thoſe ſhameful ſentiments. 'We are not 'now, ſaid ſhe, to think of reigning 'through madame de Monteſpan, we 'are to hinder any other perſon from 'reigning after her. Leave me to con-'vert her: if you make me angry, I will 'convert you yourſelf.'

Madame de Richelieu gave way, aſtoniſhed at the aſcendant ſhe had over her, her who had been accuſtomed to exert ſuch tyranny over the minds of others, that ſhe had married the duke de Richelieu in ſpite of Mazarin, Anne of Auſtria, and the dutcheſs d'Aiguillon; obtained the poſt of lady of honour to the queen, contrary to the intentions of the queen herſelf; and acquired the eſteem of the king, notwithſtanding her paſt faults, and her preſent abject compliances.

CHAPTER II.

The commencement of the king's *affection for* madame de Maintenon.

THE two ladies were ſtill engaged in a converſation concerning madame de Monteſpan, when the king ſent for madame de Maintenon. He did not doubt but the marchioneſs had confided to madame de Maintenon her laſt ſentiments at parting. He ſhewed an eager curioſity to hear them: madame de Maintenon ſpoke to him of his miſtreſs, of God, of what he owed to his people, with all that ſuperiority which virtue acquires, by a plainneſs juſtified by diſintereſtedneſs. When ſhe declared againſt the king's amour with the marchioneſs, ſhe deſtroyed her own intereſt. Madame de Monteſpan was bound to the court by chains, madame de Maintenon was held to thoſe chains by a ſingle thread.

But whether it was that this ſubordinate favour was odious to her, on account of the ſuſpicions it ſubjected her to; whether the ſtate of her fortune, by promiſing her an agreeable life at Paris, made it eaſy for her

her to renounce the court, or whether influenced by other motives no leſs generous, but more pure, it is certain that ſhe indulged the enthuſiaſm of her piety, and would not quit the king till he had promiſed her no more to recall the marchioneſs de Monteſpan.

Lewis, ſtill ſtruggling in the ſnares of love, tho' he made this promiſe, yet ſeemed to make it with regret. 'She loves me, 'ſaid he, ſighing, and I ſtill love her. 'Ah Sire! replied madame de Maintenon, 'if you love her, would you compleat her 'ruin, and her infamy? honour is of more 'price than all your treaſures, and the 'whole world is not worth a ſingle ſoul: 'if ſhe had ever truly loved you, would 'ſhe have dragged you into perdition? 'when love is not virtuous, it is the moſt 'ſhameful of vices.'

The king was leaning againſt the chimney, and liſtened to her with that attention which invites the plainneſs of truth. She took advantage of thoſe favourable moments. 'It is, ſaid ſhe, doubtleſs, per-'mitted to me to maintain the intereſts of 'my friend, but it would be preſumption 'to give advice to my king: yet if ....' here ſhe ſtop'd, and ſought to read in his eyes a pardon for this freedom, and permiſſion to hazard a new.

The

The king aſſured her that ſhe might ſay whatever ſhe pleaſed, adding that he was too well convinced of her regard for his honour and intereſt to be offended at any thing that came from her.

'I would ſay then, Sire, reſumed ma-
'dame de Maintenon, that if the benefits
'your majeſty has conferred upon me,
'authoriſe me to expreſs my gratitude,
'by giving you advice of the utmoſt
'importance, I would ſay that guilty
'love is fatal to the glory of a prince; that
'for a man to ſeduce the wife of his
'neighbour, is an injuſtice puniſhable by
'the laws of every nation; but for a
'prince to take away by violence the
'wife of his ſubject, is a crime for which
'there is no name. Ah! madame, re-
'plied the king, even this I have com-
'mitted, ceaſe to reproach me: I have
'loved too much like a ſovereign, I have
'carried my authority too far: it was
'mean to take advantage of my power,
'it was unjuſt to abuſe it. I ſee, I feel,
'I bluſh for it. But all this I have done
'in ſpite of myſelf. I have loved with
'too much ardour, I was no longer
'maſter of myſelf, and ſhewed too well
'that I was ſo of others. This reduced
'me to the neceſſity of committing fault
'upon fault.'

'Truly,

'Truly, Sire, replied madame de 'Maintenon, you accuſe yourſelf with 'ſo much candor that it is ſufficient to de- 'liver you to your own reflexions: only 'leave, I conjure you, leave to madame 'de Monteſpan the only two reſources 'which now remain for her; tears of 'contrition, which can alone reconcile her 'with God, and a voluntary retreat into 'a cloiſter, which can alone reſtore her 'to the eſteem of the world. Inſtead of 'diſputing with heaven a heart which it 'would raviſh from you, ceaſe, Sire, to 'give an example of libertiniſm, of which 'your court, and your whole kingdom 'catches the contagion, which fills our ſex 'with corruption, and yours with baſe- 'neſs. A time will come, when long 'remorſe ſhall ſucceed to theſe ſhort 'pleaſures. Turn, Sire, turn your eyes 'upon the Carmelites, and there ſee to 'what puniſhments guilty paſſion con- 'demns itſelf.'

There was no reſiſting the looks, the action, the voice of madame de Maintenon: madame de Monteſpan when ſometimes ſurprized by her in a fault, would intreat her to be ſilent to ſhield herſelf from the magick of her eloquence: a moment afterwards ſhe would conjure her to ſpeak, to eſcape the tyranny of a ſilence ſtill more powerfully perſuaſive. Madame de

de Maintenon has been repreſented as a devotee outrageous in her zeal, a female pedant with a veil upon her head, a ſcourge in her hand, a maſque upon her face, her eyes ſometimes bent upon the ground, ſometimes raiſed towards heaven. Lewis, the moſt delicate of men, the moſt praiſed and flattered of kings, would not have reliſhed truth out of the mouth of a magpie.

Madame de Maintenon was ſkillful in chuſing thoſe moments when ſure of pleaſing, ſhe was liſtened to with favourable prejudices; ſhe conveyed her reproofs in language ſo ſoft, ſo inſinuating, that they entered deep into the heart. The ſound of her voice ſo harmonious, her accent ſo juſt, ſo affecting, the candor and ſweetneſs ſo viſible in her open countenance, the natural action of the fineſt hand in the world, eyes that ſparkled intelligence, the graceful movements of a form, ſo elegant, yet ſo majeſtick, that it effaced all that was beautiful in the court, all contributed to give her thoſe moving graces of oratory which convince the underſtanding, and captivate the will.

Her perfect knowledge of the human heart, the conſequence of having deeply ſtudied her own, repreſt the ſallies of her exceſſive frankneſs, and warned her of the inſtant when

when it was moſt proper to begin, and when it was neceſſary to leave off. Mademoiſelle d'Armagnac, the marchioneſs d'Havrincour, madame de Lande, mademoiſelle d'Aumale, all theſe Ladies who knew her but in a very advanced age, yet at preſent declare that when they ſaw her they thought they beheld the Graces; when they heard her, Wiſdom herſelf ſeemed to ſpeak.

Lewis tranſported to find that virtue ſhould employ the ſame charms to bring him back to God, that vice had made uſe of to draw him to herſelf, prolonged a converſation in which he enjoyed the preſence of a woman who ſo agreeably diſguſted him with the reſt of her ſex. He found no difficulty in ſwearing to her who began to pleaſe, that he would renounce her who had pleaſed ſo long ago. All his deſires now centered in her, who ſo earneſtly endeavoured to extinguiſh them. He had triumphed over an innocent, and he had thought himſelf happy; he had ſubdued a coquet, and his vanity was ſoothed by it; all that now remained for him was to conquer a female philoſopher who did not deign even to defy him, and this was to him the heighth of good fortune. When love is yet only a ſlight inclination, we reproach ourſelves with it as a crime; when it is a rebellion of the

paſſions

paſſions enraged againſt the hand that enſlaves them, we applaud it as a noble ſentiment. Chriſtina diſdained to reign over a king, quitted the beautiful Sparre * and the Throne, thought Conde, was too great a general to know how to love, and went to Brabant to ſeek the conqueror of Rocroi.

In madame de Monteſpan Lewis now ſaw a woman inſenſible as her baby, and like that the ſport of every hand; but in madame de Maintenon an amazon whoſe pride it was neceſſary to abate: a ſentiment to which he had hitherto been a ſtranger, told him, that for hearts worn out with pleaſures, there was one worth all the others, that of ſubjecting, and profaning virtue.

'Muſt I then, ſaid the king ſighing, muſt 'I reſolve to ſee no more the two perſons 'in the world who are moſt dear to me?' He added that he flattered himſelf ſhe would at leaſt continue with his children, and that the abbé Gobelin would convince her that the mother would commit more faults in educating them, than ſhe had done by giving them birth.

Madame de Maintenon paſſing over the firſt part of this ſpeech, which ſhe

* Her maid of honour.

might

might naturally attribute to a habit the king had of ſaying only gallant things to women, replied to the latter, that her reſolution to leave the court was founded upon two reaſons, and theſe were her averſion to a place of libertiniſm where the maſter alone was in the way to be virtuous, and her uneaſineſs cauſed by that ſtrange medley of reſpect and contempt, friendſhip and hate, confidence and diſtruſt, that madame de Monteſpan treated her with. That by retiring to Paris ſhe ſhould be eaſy upon the firſt article; but that madame de Monteſpan could only decide with regard to the ſecond. That ſhe would ſuſpend her reſolution till ſhe ſaw whether devotion would correct the faults in madame de Monteſpan's temper, and teach her that it was alike ſhameful and unjuſt to make criminal conceſſions to her ſuperiours, and to treat with haughtineſs, with caprice and unkindneſs, her friends and her inferiours.

The king finding that he ſhould be obliged to diſſemble his deſigns, promiſed her all ſhe required: but he doubtleſs promiſed himſelf that he would take ſuch meaſures as that neither the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, nor madame de Maintenon ſhould eſcape him. He had the former to puniſh for having abandoned him, the latter to humble for having forced him

to

to conſent to it. Madame de Monteſpan was a rebel whom it was neceſſary he ſhould reduce; madame de Maintenon gloried in her freedom, and her he reſolved to ſubdue: one ſometimes excited his pity; the other always raiſed his admiration; both of them, thoſe deſires which he had vowed to repreſs.

Thus it was that virtue completed that fortune, which indigence had begun. Thus was madame de Maintenon connected with the court which ſhe deteſted, by thoſe very ſteps ſhe had taken to remove herſelf from it. This averſion for a court will with difficulty be believed ſincere, by thoſe who do not live in it, but before they pronounce abſolutely let them interrogate thoſe that do.

The king every day more charmed with madame de Maintenon, neglected nothing which he thought could make her reſidence in the court agreeable to her. He ſhewed the moſt reſpectful attention, the ſofteſt homage to this awful character, new enough to pleaſe greatly, aimable enough to pleaſe for a long time: when his eſteem and veneration for her had taken away all hope of ſeducing her, the idea of tempting her, of ſeeing her every day, was preferred by him to all other pleaſures. His paſſion, nouriſhed in ſilence never

never appeared but in that reſpect ſo ſeldom ſeen in a lover, ſo wonderful in a king, till the moment when by the death of his queen he was at liberty to offer at one time his heart and his hand to her whom he had at firſt wiſhed and afterwards deſpaired of obtaining at any other price, convinced by her perſeverance in virtue, that ſhe was not to be ſubdued, by her humility in grandeur, that ſhe was ſuperiour to ambition.

When madame de Maintenon recalled to her remembrance this ſeries of events that raiſed her to the rank from which they were moſt likely to exclude her, when ſhe ſaw wiſdom advance her by thoſe very meaſures which prudence would have diſdained, when ſhe found herſelf fixed to the throne by thoſe efforts ſhe made to diſengage herſelf from the court, ſhe doubtleſs exclaimed, Oh! happy virtue: but when ſhe reflected that the firſt link to this chain of ſurprizing incidents was the guilty fruitfulneſs of madame de Monteſpan, which ſhe had ſo openly condemned, and which had nevertheleſs been ſo advantageous to her, did ſhe not ſay in ſecret, Ah! fortunate vice!

CHAP

CHAPTER III.

Cabals of the devotees, the murmurs of the courtiers.

THE king by his behaviour removed all doubts concerning the cauſe of Madame de Monteſpan's retreat. He went to the pariſh church, he commended the zeal of the miſſionaries, he mentioned monſieur Lecuyer with approbation, and as he came out of church, ſaid to the miſſionaries, 'I have great faults to 'expiate, but you have favour with God: 'pray for me.'

At theſe words the devotees triumphed, the libertines turned pale, ſenſible and unprejudiced perſons foreſaw that this regularity would not laſt long. So much beauty ſtill on one ſide, ſo many deſires on the other, and thoſe ſuppreſt only for the love of God, was a ſacrifice too difficult to be perfect.

However the biſhop of Condom received the compliments and congratulations of the whole court, and but weakly oppoſed the flattering appellation of a ſecond ſaint Ambroſe. Being conſulted by the king, who was deſirous of receiving the com-

communion, he would permit him the ſacrament of penitence only. The preachers claimed a ſhare of his glory, and thundered with apoſtolick zeal againſt fornication and adultery. The king having been preſent at a ſermon in which the preacher inveighed with great vehemence againſt the love of fame and of women, ſaid to the prince of Marſillac as he was going out of church, 'What do you 'think of what you have juſt heard?' 'I think, Sire, that..... heſitated Marſillac, and ſtopt. 'I for my part am 'very well pleaſed with it,' reſumed Lewis. 'And I alſo, added the courtier.'

The Jeſuits, whoſe zeal is ſo cautious, ſo prudent, ſpoke with as much freedom, as if they had thought reſerve no longer neceſſary: one of them in his ſermon explaining the parable of Nathan, ventured to apply it to the king, and tranſported with enthuſiaſtick fervour, apoſtraphized him ſeveral times in theſe words: *Tu es ille vir.* The king deſired to know the meaning of them, but no one durſt tell him, one ſaid that he did not hear the words, another thathe had forgot the latin language. Sire, ſaid the duke de Montauzier, the preacher ſaid, *Thou art the man.*

The king could not help diſcovering ſome ſigns of indignation; the courtiers, who

who probably were not ſorry that their maſter had been told a harſh truth, but would have been grieved not to be thought capable of offending againſt all truth to pleaſe him, endeavoured to heighthen his reſentment againſt this imprudent apoſtle. But Lewis, whoſe ears were ſtill ſtruck with the reproofs of madame de Maintenon, and who would have ſacrificed a province to the pleaſure of ſhewing an inſtance of greatneſs of ſoul, replied, 'He has done 'his duty, let us do ours.'

Mean time madame de Monteſpan arrived at Paris: aſtoniſhed to ſee herſelf there, frightened at the ſolitude around her, ſhe ſometimes aſked if it was true that ſhe had left the king; ſometimes by what enchantment ſhe had been able to reſolve upon it. Impatient to hear news of him, to know what he had ſaid of her departure, if he regretted her loſs, if he loved her ſtill, ſhe was upon the point of returning herſelf to ſatisfy all her doubts. Madame de Maintenon did not yet appear; ſhe dreaded leſt the king ſhould retain her, the ſtings of jealouſy were already fixed in her heart.

Tired out with vain expectation, ſhe eagerly flew to a houſe, which madame de Maintenon had in Paris, ſhe found there no one but the woman who had the

care

care of it, 'when madame de Maintenon 'comes, ſaid ſhe, ſend her inſtantly to 'me, you know me, do you not? Yes, re-'plied the woman, every one knows that 'you are the lady who purchaſed the place 'of madame de la Valliere.* You inſult 'me, child, anſwered madame de Mon-'teſpan, with that ſoftneſs which makes 'every thing be forgot, but you ſay the 'truth, and I have deſerved worſe.'

At Verſailles madame de Maintenon and monſieur Boſſuet laboured to ſeparate the two lovers for ever. The biſhop was of opinion that he ought to prohibit the king from receiving the ſacrament in order to ſpare him the commiſſion of a ſacrilege. And madame de Maintenon thought it neceſſary that the marchioneſs de Monteſpan ſhould be ordered to recieve it, to guard her againſt relapſing into ſin, by the obligation ſo ſacred an engagement laid her under to perform her duty. But it was not eaſy for a woman, ſcarce eſcaped from the arms of her lover, to *ſee and taſte how good the Lord is.*

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan had at length the ſatisfaction to ſee madame de Maintenon again, who ſaid a great many kind

* The marchioneſs d . . . . told me ſhe had this ſtory from madame de Maintenon herſelf.

things to her from the queen, but ſpoke not a word of the king. Eſteem could not conſole her for the loſs of love. Madame de Monteſpan would have readily anſwered, Let her continue to hate me, provided he loves me ſtill. Madame de Maintenon uſed her utmoſt endeavours to ſmooth the way to heaven, to this new convert, ſhe did not fatigue her with exacting auſterities and prayers, ſhe required of her only good works, with a hope that the pleaſure of doing good would ſhew her how little all other pleaſures were, compared with that only true one.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan always unequal, always various, would be one day cold in her devotion, another day full of fervour and zeal; and alarmed, and reaſſured madame de Maintenon by turns. Incapable of recollection, finding always a void within herſelf, ſhe had not leiſure to perceive, ſhe was out of the delightful hurry of a court, by the crowd of devotees, who reſorted to her houſe, each emulous to confirm her in her new ſentiments. Accuſtomed to adulation, her vanity was ſtill ſoothed by the extravagant praiſes the prieſts beſtowed upon her repentance. She ſoon perſuaded herſelf that the ſoul of a marchioneſs was of far greater value than that of a common perſon, and that by

ſhewing

ſhewing rigour to the king, ſhe rendered a ſervice to God.

The abbé Gobelin kept her continually employed in exerciſes of piety, and acts of benevolence, ſo that languor was not permitted to approach her. The minute practices of devotion filled up thoſe moments which uſed to be given to the little cabals of the court, and pride which ſuggeſted to her the notion of being under the immediate care and direction of the divine Being, recompenſed her for the ſacrifices her vanity had made.

Madame de Maintenon endeavoured to prolong the illuſion, till the king had entirely thrown off his chains, or till the habit of being virtuous had made the marchioneſs love virtue. At her perſuaſion monſieur Boſſuet prevailed upon the queen to ſee the new penitent. They met at the convent of the Carmelites, in the ſtreet du Bouloy: the interview laſted too hours. Madame de Monteſpan threw herſelf at the feet of the queen, implored her pardon, and promiſed to repair by a life of exemplary piety, the ſcandalous ſins ſhe had committed. The queen miſtook her remorſe for virtue, ſhe believed her tears ſincere, ſhe dried them up, and inſtead of permitting her to quit the poſt ſhe had in her houſehold, ſhe ſaid to her, with

an exceſs of goodneſs. 'It is with me 'that you have ſinned, with me you ſhall 'live penitent.'

The remainder of their converſation was very free and unreſerved on both ſides: madame de Monteſpan inſtructed the queen how to pleaſe the king, the queen taught madame de Monteſpan how to pleaſe God.

Two viſits made by the marchioneſs to the abbey of Fontevrault diſconcerted all the politicians. Some ſaid that ſhe went there to ſettle the time of her retreat. It is very probable, truly, replied others, that the abbeſs her ſiſter will adviſe her to take the veil: no, it is all artifice, or at moſt the effect of a love quarrel. The Janſeniſts maintained * that the king was viſibly purſued by that grace, the diſciples of which he had ſo conſtantly perſecuted: that his crimes were the conſequence of the faulty compliances of his confeſſors; that indeed every thing might be expected from the rectitude of his own heart, and his readineſs to reform, but that it was not aſtoniſhing that a jeſuit ſhould not be able to take advantage of the powerful influence of grace.

The huguenots, who had learned to know a devout king from the conduct of Lewis

* M. of Hebert.

the

the thirteenth, and who were made acquainted with the character of Boſſuet by his *expoſition of the catholick faith*, were alarmed at the power this prelate acquired over the conſcience of the prince. They were deſirous that Lewis ſhould be virtuous, but they were apprehenſive of the artificial and deſtroying zeal of his moraliſts: they publickly reported that the king would come out of his hands, as indifferent a chriſtian, as Turenne was a bad catholick: that he compounded with the paſſions of the one, as he had done with the errors of the other: and that irregularities of conduct were rather concealed than reformed, when the father of a family choſe for his counſellor the precepter to his ſon.

To the ſlow ſeverity of the biſhop, they oppoſed the vigour and firmneſs of thoſe ſynods which ſolemnly interdicted Henry IV. from the ſacrement of the Lord's ſupper. Boſſuet took no other revenge for theſe ſlanders than by converting thoſe who propagated them, by perſuading the pope to give his approbation to that *expoſition*, in which Maimbourg found every thing but truth, by condemning the frailty of the king without reſerve, as without bitterneſs; by being as complaiſant as a courtier in diſputes upon tenets with the calviniſts; and as firm as a father of the church in moral deciſions with the king.

But now the feaſt of Pentecoſt approached. The biſhop permitted the king to perform his devotions, and madame de Maintenon prepared the Marchioneſs for the ſame ſolemn act. Lewis twice ſaid to the queen, and the curate of Verſailles, 'Be perſuaded that I will not in the ſmalleſt degree alter my reſolutions, rely upon my word, and let the inquiſitive know my ſentiments.'

Thoſe who knew how capable he was of ſubduing his paſſions, believed that he had pronounced an irrevocable decree againſt miſtreſſes. Madame de Maintenon knew him better: ſhe foreſaw that if the marchioneſs de Monteſpan was quitted, ſhe would be ſoon ſucceeded by another.

The queen, governed entirely by a confeſſor full of Spaniſh prejudices, inſtead of ſhewing any ſolicitude to regain the king's love, employed herſelf in praying for his ſalvation, diſguſted him with an ill-timed piety, diſdained to improve by dreſs thoſe charms that were yet unimpaired, abſented herſelf from all diverſions, or at leaſt appeared at them with languor and diſcontent.

The princeſs de Montpenſier, who had all the curioſity of a woman, ſurrounded with

with cabals and intrigues, and was excluded from a ſhare in any, went to viſit madame de Monteſpan, and told her that loving her ſo much as ſhe did, ſhe could not help wiſhing for her return to court. The marchioneſs anſwered her only with a loud laugh, with which the princeſs did not ſeem offended, ſo well had the impriſonment of the count de Lauzun inured her to affronts. Madame de Monteſpan at length condeſcending to anſwer her, ſaid, 'If I return to court it is neceſſary that I 'ſhould change my name, for how can I 'appear again in publick with this name 'of Monteſpan, which always awakens 'the remembrance of my huſband's extra-'vagancies, and the follies of his wife.' The princeſs de Montpenſier did not, till ſome years afterwards, comprehend the ſecret meaning of theſe words, as will be ſeen in the ſubſequent part of theſe memoirs.

At Paris, and at Verſailles, the king's indifference was the cauſe of great uneaſineſs, while in the provinces they bleſt heaven for it. It is neceſſary, ſaid the courtiers, that our king ſhould have a miſtreſs or a prime miniſter: both may indeed commit great faults: but by reſtraining perſons in place within the bounds of their duty, they alſo do great good: a woman ſoftens the manners of the prince, ſhe

makes him acceſſible to intreaty, ſhe calms his reſentment, ſhe warns him of his faults, ſhe inſpires him with the love of glory, and of the arts, ſhe gives him that gentleneſs, that moderation which render authority ſo ſweet, and obedience ſo eaſy. The abuſe of ſubordinate power is ſuppreſt; the miniſters are divided, but they ſerve with more diligence. Who would wiſh to be a king? who would not think it the greateſt misfortune to be one, if the maſter dare not indulge himſelf in what the meaneſt of his ſubjects thinks is permitted to him? A miſtreſs is expenſive; but why ſhould that be an objection, if luxury reſtores to the people what oppreſſive edicts have forced from them? What are thoſe places, diſtributed by madame de Monteſpan, thoſe penſions allowed to different artiſts, thoſe petitions ſo frequently preſented by her, but merit which ſhe rewards, and misfortunes which ſhe relieves?

But manners are corrupted! were our manners then more pure under the reign of the pious Lewis the thirteenth, who loved no woman? and his haughty cardinal, who dared to love all, was he leſs reſpected by the pope and the Sorbonne? But the king's ſalvation is in danger! alas, will he not ſoon enough be old? his devotion will be then more diſadvantageous to us, than his amours are now. But the abject ſubmiſſion

miſſion of our nobility! Ridiculous prejudice; the homage we pay madame de Monteſpan is part of that adoration we owe to our king: we muſt now inſtead of one woman pay homage to twenty: and to what women! to madame Colbert, as inacceſſible as her huſband, to madame Dufrênoi, as haughty as her lover, and to ſome dependants of Seignelay, who ought to be ſhut up in the ſuburbs.

Such was the reaſoning of thoſe men, who were inceſſantly talking of decency, and deſpiſed virtue, who knew the whole extent of authority, and were ignorant of the power of the laws, and the influence of example. Madame de Maintenon reaſoned better, 'if France, ſaid ſhe, had 'a king diveſted of paſſions, what would 'become of other nations?' She knew that the counſils of love, and the fears of madame de Monteſpan, had ſaved Holland from an invaſion.

CHAPTER IV.

A Marriage propoſed to Madame de Maintenon.

THE time drew near when madame de Maintenon was to go to Barege with the duke du Maine, but the marchioneſs de Monteſpan could not reſolve to part with her, and retained her by threatning to abjure devotion, if ſhe was abandoned by her who had at firſt adviſed and afterwards confirmed her in it.

However ſolitude and reſtraint began to recall her deſires to what ſhe had loſt, and ambition to ſhew her the means of recovering it. She ſecretly made propoſitions to Louvois, and promiſes to Marſillac. Madame de Maintenon happened to diſcover theſe intrigues, and broke them off, and was from thenceforward looked upon by madame de Maintenon as an importunate ſpy, and preſſed to go ſoon to Barege.

The dutcheſs de Richelieu, who always feared madame de Maintenon would eſcape from her, either by force or inclination, reſolved to fix her at court by a marriage, which

which would make her a dutcheſs. She had laid this ſcheme a long time before, but finding that it was probable madame de Monteſpan would never be recalled, or that madame de Maintenon would retire from court after her journey to Barege, ſhe reſumed her deſigns with more ardor than ever.

The duke de V... B.... was the perſon ſhe fixed upon for a huſband to madame de Maintenon. His youth waſted in debauchery, his old age conſuming in diſeaſe, the remembrance of two wives ſufficiently bad, could not prevent this old nobleman from a reſolution to take a third. The dutcheſs de Richelieu had inſpired him with ſo violent a paſſion for her friend that he did not think he ſhould debaſe himſelf by marrying the widow of one of his dependants, and who had ſince been herſelf his dependant. Madame de Monteſpan entered ſo coldly into this ſcheme that it had hitherto produced nothing; but being inceſſantly oppoſed and reſtrained by madame de Maintenon, ſhe at length conſented through policy, to do what ſhe was not incited to by friendſhip. She joined her endeavours to thoſe of madame de Richelieu to remove the firſt obſtacles, and to ſmooth the way to ſucceſs.

Madame de Maintenon was pleaſed to find that her burleſque huſband had not placed her below the moſt illuſtrious alliances; but ſhe thought it hard that ſhe ſhould all her life have only opportunities of changing her fetters, and of becoming a ſlave to an old man, after having been ſo to a cripple and a child. She ſuffered this treaty to go on as they pleaſed, by whom it was managed, and ſeemed wholly indifferent about its ſucceſs. But when ſhe was applied to, to declare her reſolution, neither a great title, a high rank at court, nor all thoſe ſplendid trifles which make ſo many marriages, could force her conſent: vanity was ſilent, and reaſon only ſpoke.

Fear had prevailed upon madame de Monteſpan to favour this marriage, a fear more powerful induced her to break it off. Among the different inquietudes with which her mind was agitated, the deſire of knowing her deſtiny was one of the greateſt. Credulous to exceſs, ſhe had tried all the ridiculous forms, by which future events are foretold. Either diſcontented with the anſwers, becauſe they were unfavourable, or doubtful of their certainty, becauſe they were very different, ſhe reſolved to conſult one of thoſe women who read the deſtinies of mortals in the lines of the face and hand. She went to the houſe of the moſt celebrated fortune-

teller

teller in Paris, attended by madame d'Hudicourt and madame de Maintenon, dreſt like her women. The ſorcereſs, after the uſual grimaces, ſtarted back with terror and ſurpriſe, 'What do I ſee?' ſaid ſhe, pointing to madame de Maintenon: 'yet 'a little time longer and your woman 'ſhall be a greater lady than you are; and 'as for you, my dear, ſaid ſhe to madame 'd'Hudicourt, you will be baniſhed from the court 'for your propenſity to ſcandal.'

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan was greatly affected with this prediction, ſhe never looked upon madame de Maintenon afterwards without obſerving that ſhe had indeed ſomething in her eyes, which indicated that ſhe would be one day ſuperiour to her. She dreaded leſt her marriage with the duke de V .... ſhould be the firſt ſtep towards this predicted ſuperiority, ſhe therefore croſſed it with eager ſolicitude; but afterwards, by the force of continual perſecutions ſhe brought on another, which effectually humbled her and elevated her rival: ſo that the marchioneſs contributed to the accompliſhment of the oracle, by doing every thing ſhe could to elude it, and madame de Maintenon by avoiding one ſlavery, threw herſelf into a greater.

The

The dutcheſs de Richelieu often preſt her in favour of the duke de V.... but ſhe could not prevail; madame de Maintenon always anſwered that the duke wanted two eſſential qualities, virtue and an eſtate. However ſhe might poſſibly have been induced at laſt to conſent, if the king having been informed of the affairs, had not ſaid: 'If ſhe has an inclination to marry, I will 'give her a nobleman of the firſt rank for 'a huſband.'

CHAPTER V.

Madame de Monteſpan *returns to court.*

THE king was now wholly employed in conſidering how to recall his miſtreſs, without having his meaſures diſconcerted by thoſe who had undertaken to break his chains. Monſieur Boſſuet, whoſe zeal was too fervent to be always regulated by prudence, tired him with exhortations, and talked to a prince full of paſſion, with all the auſterity of a man who has none. He doubtleſs imagined that it was as eaſy to reſign the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, as mademoiſelle des Vieux. He exacted from the king a formal diſmiſſion of his miſtreſs. The king conſented to

to it, and desired that he would be the bearer, but instead of that cruel farewell which he had promised, he wrote her a very passionate letter. The bishop, extremely pleased that he had as he imagined gained his point, delivered this letter to madame de Montespan, and brought back an answer still more tender. This correspondence was carried on for some days, the lovers made vows to love chastely for the future, and appointed meetings to break those vows: Racine put the king's letters into verse; and the bishop of Condom was the messenger of the lovers, and covered with a grey cloak went every evening from Clagni to Versailles.

The king went a few days afterwards to see the buildings that were carrying on there. He found his mistress in the midst of twelve hundred workmen, wholly employed in finishing her house, endeavouring to forget the crimes by which she had purchased it, adorning the most voluptuous closets, and exhausting all the industry of art, to gratify the caprices of a new kind of luxury.

This first interview was very reserved, but it foretold a greater intimacy; and the homage paid by the courtiers to madame de Montespan discovered to the bishop that he had been duped, and that he had done

done what Vardes, or Lauzun would have been aſhamed of doing. Madame de Monteſpan conſoled him for the ridicule he had drawn upon himſelf, by aſſuring him that ſhe would be always rigid to her lover, and the king rewarded him for his good offices, by naming him for the poſt of firſt almoner to the dauphineſs.

Madame de Maintenon could not approve of madame de Monteſpan's return to court, the lovers indeed only ſaw each other in publick, or if they had any private interviews, they had no impure conſequences; but if it is the action that makes the ſcandal, it is the will that conſtitutes the crime. Madame de Monteſpan's reſerve was the conſequence of her ambition, and thus by affecting a return to virtue ſhe offended it more, and gave occaſion to the wiſe and good to fear, that what was only an artifice of refined coquettry, ſhould be miſtaken for an effect of religion: they dreaded the aſcendant of a woman who both knew how to intoxicate the prince with love, and to keep him within the bounds of reſpect.

Already the honours that were paid her were carried to the higheſt degree, the queen gave the example, the dutcheſs de Richelieu ſupported her in the moſt ridiculous claims: madame de Monteſpan took

way

way of all dutcheſſes, and the honours which ſhe had rejected as flattery, while guilty, ſhe exacted as her right when ſhe was no longer ſo. Every one yielded to a ſubject who never appeared in publick but with the pomp of royalty, had always four of the body guard on each ſide of her coach: this pageantry aſtoniſhed the nation, which had forgot that the Parliament ſent deputies to Henry the IV. with compliments of condolance upoh the death of the fair Gabriella.

In the midſt of this exterior triumph, a fund of ſadneſs was perceived: the king had contributed to it ſufficiently to fill madame de Maintenon with grief, but not to ſatisfy madame de Monteſpan. New pleaſures, new ſhews were prepared at Fontainbleau: Turenne was killed, and the people exclaimed that madame de Monteſpan had been his murderer, and that God made manifeſt his indignation againſt the woman who kept the king in ſin, who exhauſted the finances, and built a magnificent palace with the ſubſtance of the citizens. Theſe murmurs were repeated within the king's hearing by men who diſapproved, yet laughed at them, and by women who envied and curſed madame de Monteſpan.

The

The king, to comfort her for theſe cruel cenſures, gave a marſhal's batoon to Vivonne her brother, an honour which he merited a year afterwards by defeating the Spaniſh and Dutch fleets in the road of Palermo.

Lewis made a diſtinction between his wife and his miſtreſs, which he would have been the firſt to bluſh at, if the prince who had the moſt attention to the laws of politeneſs had not been wholly blinded by paſſion: the queen one day loſt the meſſe and a thouſand crowns: 'Let us calculate how much this amounts 'to in a year,' ſaid the king to her. He did not calculate with madame de Monteſpan.

The ungrateful, the perfidious madame de Monteſpan no otherwiſe requited the queen's goodneſs than by inceſſantly ſpreading new ſnares for her: ſometimes ſhe alarmed her with falſe ſuſpicions: ſometimes ſhe forced her into little parties, from which it would have been more prudent to have been abſent: ſhe often detained her at cards till two hours after midnight, and then made the king obſerve that * a devotee could be fond of amuſement.

* Letter from Madame de Maintenon to madame de Dangeau.

was

The dutcheſs de Richelieu was the baſe inſtrument of this treachery: and how was this lady of honour rewarded for thus betraying her royal miſtreſs? She received ſome billets from the king while he was with the army, and theſe ſhe ſhewed to her friends as very affectionate, but which would have only been thought complaiſant, if madame de Maintenon had ſhewn thoſe ſhe received at the ſame time.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan was greatly perplexed between her reflexions on the conſequences of granting the king favours, and the danger of refuſing them, between her fear of being too laviſh of them, and her jealouſy of his ſeeking them elſewhere. The king was not much concerned about the ſins of the heart, but he did not indulge the ſame illuſion about the ſins of the fleſh. But madame de Monteſpan was perfectly eaſy, a capuchin friar had removed all her ſcruples, by whining out to her theſe words, *Woman! many ſins are remitted to you becauſe you have loved much.* The moſt auſtere order of the church will always furniſh the moſt indulgent confeſſors. *

* Miſſionaries of the biſhop d'Agen.

Madame

Madame de Maintenon finding that ſhe could not procure an abſolute parting, would at leaſt have prevailed upon the marchioneſs to confine herſelf to friendſhip: but madame de Monteſpan was not able to reſolve upon that: ſo much beauty ſtill, and ſo much pride, with difficulty ſubmits to hold only the ſecond place, which never appears to be ſo ſecure as the firſt. However ſhe was under a neceſſity of taking a reſolution immediately, for the king demanded an abſolute anſwer, with calm ſolicitations that expreſſed deſires more ardent than fixed. Madame de Monteſpan, who was doubtleſs conſumed with the ſame fires, determined to ſin again, and to continue to reign.

CHAPTER VI.

Madame de Maintenon's journey to Barege.

MADAME de Maintenon now left the court without regret, and at laſt taſted the pleaſure of being once more free. The king ſent his orders to marſhal d'Albret, who was governor of Guyenne, concerning the manner in which he would have his ſon received. I have ſeen this letter: Lewis mentions madame de Main-

Maintenon to him with the perplexity of a man who was beginning to love, and who knew that the marſhal had loved her. The duke du Maine was recei·d at Bourdeaux with all the honours that could have been paid to the Dauphin: probably his father was deſirous of accuſtoming people to that elevation he was preparing for him. In the midſt of this magnificence, madame de Maintenon was not able to repreſs ſome melancholly emotions at the ſight of château-trompette, or help making a compariſon between what ſhe had been, and what ſhe then was. 'There, ſaid ſhe, to monſieur d'Albret, 'is the place where I received my firſt 'education: but I aſſure you that I know 'a priſon ſtill more ſevere, and that my 'bed is not better than my cradle.'

Long griefs and great anxiety ſucceeded to theſe momentary pleaſures. The duke du Maine was ſeized with an ague which after ſeventeen fits brought him into the utmoſt danger. Madame de Maintenon oppreſt with ſorrow expected his death every moment, and wiſhed for her own: what dreadful news had ſhe to ſend the king! what reproaches to expect from madame de Monteſpan, when ſhe preſented her the lifeleſs body of a child ſo dear to her! what a loſs for herſelf, what a cruel trial to a heart ſo tender as hers!

The

The young prince, by the ſkill of Fagon his phyſician, or the efforts of nature, recovered from this diſeaſe: this was the beginning of Fagon's fortune, which followed the progreſs of madame de Maintenon's, his candour, his diſcretion and his abilities being every day more known to her, and every day more eſteemed.

The baths of Bagneres, and of Barege, which were tried alternately and were at firſt ineffectual, at length ſtrengthened the duke du Maine's leg, and freed him from his lameneſs. Madame de Maintenon addreſſed always to the king the accounts ſhe conſtantly ſent of every alteration in the dukes health; he was extremely pleaſed with her letters; the tender ſolicitude ſhe ſhewed for the duke du Maine heightened the charm he found in them, and the ſolidity of her underſtanding removed all the prejudices he had conceived againſt *the wit*.

She paſſed through Poitou in her return, viſited all her relations, and was received by them as one now in favour, ſhe expreſſed the ſame tenderneſs for them as if ſhe had always been ſo, reconciled herſelf ſincerely to thoſe who had uſurped her eſtate, renewed her friendſhip with the Villettes who after her converſion had forgot her; paid the penſion ſhe owed to the convent of Urſelines at Niort, learned that ſhe was

deſcended from one of the beſt families of the province, without being more vain for that knowledge.

Madame de Monteſpan and her ſiſter the abbeſſe of Fontevrault went to meet the prince. It was therefore reported that madame de Maintenon was diſmiſſed from her employment, that the marchioneſs was ordered to tell her ſo, and the abbeſs to comfort her in her diſgrace. No one doubted of the truth of this report when the ſecret quarrels between the favourite and the governeſs * were known, which for

* ‘ I will give you a little view of the inſide of the ‘ cards, which will ſurprize you, it is, that the per- ‘ fect friendſhip between madame de Monteſpan and ‘ her travelling friend, has been for theſe two years ‘ an utter averſion. It is a keenneſs of reſentment, ‘ an antipathy, a contrariety like that of white and ‘ black. You aſk from whence it proceeds; it is becauſe ‘ the inferiour friend has an haughtineſs that makes ‘ her rebel againſt the orders of her ſuperiour; ſhe ‘ does not love to obey; ſhe is willing to comply with ‘ the father, but not with the mother. It is to oblige ‘ him that ſhe undertakes this journey, and not in ‘ the leaſt to gratify her; ſhe gives an account of every ‘ thing that paſſes to him, and not to her. He is ‘ chided for having ſo much regard to a woman into- ‘ xicated with vanity; but it is not thought that ‘ this affection will continue, unleſs the averſion ceaſes, ‘ or the ſucceſs of this voyage cauſes a change in the ‘ heart of ſome perſons. This ſecret has been rolling ‘ like an earthquake, under ground, theſe ſix months; it

for two years had embittered their minds, and laid the foundation of an eternal hatred. But it is certain that the journey the marchioneſs took to meet her, was leſs from a tender impatience to ſee her ſon, than to ſooth madame de Maintenon by ſuch an inſtance of reſpect: her friendſhip was now become neceſſary to the haughty favourite, becauſe abſence had increaſed her intereſt with the king.

Nothing could be more agreeable than the ſurpriſe they concerted for the king. He did not expect the duke du Maine till the next day, and he ſaw him enter his apartment without any remains of his former lameneſs: and only led by madame de Maintenon, 'Ah! madam, ſaid he 'to the governeſs, what pleaſure do you 'give me.' Theſe words ſo expreſſive of grateful joy, ſufficiently rewarded her for all her trouble and fatigue, the praiſes of kings are generally cold and reſerved, the gratitude of Lewis was ſincere, and his acknowledgments unreſtrained.

The whole court was ſoon acquainted with the favourable reception madame de

'it begins a little to take air, I believe you will be 'ſurprized at it. The friends of the friend are much 'concerned at it, and it is thought that ſome of them 'have felt the ill effects of this miſunderſtanding. Sévigne's Letters,

Main-

Maintenon had received from the king; Louvois as eagerly ſolicitous to court female favourites, as to ruin the men, flew to her houſe, followed by all the courtiers: ſome would kiſs her hand, others her robe, ſhe laughed at them all; the flatterer is always malignant: ſome emotions of pleaſure, and perhaps pride, which eſcaped madame de Maintenon *, in thoſe moments, were ſeverely cenſured by the very perſons whoſe ſervile homage had occaſioned them.

CHAPTER VII.

Madame de Maintenon *remains at court.*

WHEN ſhe returned to court, ſhe found her ſituation was not altered for the better, the ſame cauſes for complaint ſtill ſubſiſted, little cabals, and ſevere reproaches, were renewed on both ſides. They quarrelled without reaſon, and were reconciled without forgiveneſs.

* I am ſurprized at what I have heard of madame de Maintenon, ſhe is ſaid to be ſtrangely altered, that ſhe is not the admiration of every one as formerly, and that in her the old proverb is verified; this gives occaſion for many fine moral and chriſtian reflexions to my little friend de Coulanges. ---- The marchioneſs de Sévigné's letters of November and December 1675.

Madame de Monteſpan was too capricious not to be guilty of many faults, and too great to acknowledge them. Madame de Maintenon was too haughty to endure them, and too much offended to be capable of pardoning them.

It was indeed ſurpriſing that there ſhould be continual diſſenſions, complaints, reproaches, and already a kind of rivalſhip between two women, whoſe ſituations were ſo very different; but if madame de Monteſpan had the advantage of a higher rank, madame de Maintenon poſſeſſed that of an incorruptible virtue. The diſtance between the marchioneſs and the governeſs of her children was leſſened by the king's eſteem for the latter.

In the city all ranks are diſtinguiſhed by birth, and by employments under the crown: in the court by the king's favour alone: and that kind of favour which madame de Maintenon enjoyed, was as proper to raiſe, as that which the marchioneſs poſſeſſed to humble. It was not ſtrange therefore, that madame de Maintenon ſhould return the inſults of the haughty miſtreſs with equal haughtineſs, and that ſhe ſhould at leaſt diſdain all inferiority to her, in a place where the glance of the prince exalts the ſervant, and makes the miſtreſs nothing.

The

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan expected that gratitude ſhould engage madame de Maintenon to endure every thing without murmuring; but obligations ſo often remembred by one, and repaid by the other with ſervices ſo great; ſo many injurious reproaches had cancelled all claims; a diſmiſſion ſo many times demanded, had reduced her, by whom it was refuſed, to a level with her who inſiſted upon it's being given, that it was not poſſible for madame de Maintenon to guard againſt the violence of her reſentment in thoſe altercations in which the ſofteſt and moſt grateful diſpoſition appears with ſuch diſadvantages, and is ſhocked by the benefit that is accompanied by upbraidings. Thoſe who indulge themſelves in the liberty of ſaying all, give a right to others to anſwer as truly. Thus without forgetting what ſhe owed to madame de Monteſpan, madame de Maintenon might ſometimes allow that pride to appear, which the favourite, through jealouſy or caprice, endeavoured to depreſs. 'Shall the governeſs of my 'children,' ſaid the marchioneſs to her one day, 'preſume to oppoſe me? If it is 'diſgraceful to be their governeſs, replied 'madame de Maintenon, what would it 'be to be their mother?'

Yet after affronts ſo mortifying, reproaches ſo ſevere, theſe two ladies ſtill

continued to live together: they were inceſſantly paſſing from quarrels to reconciliations, and from reconciliations to quarrels. It muſt certainly be, that madame de Monteſpan was juſt enough to repair the faults ſhe committed through the violence of her temper; or that madame de Maintenon had that aſcendant which a virtuous woman will always have over one who grieves that ſhe is not ſo.

Lewis, who was now ſated, ſeemed attached to the marchioneſs rather through fear than love; this occaſioned new bitterneſs in madame de Monteſpan towards madame de Maintenon, whom ſhe ſuſpected of giving counſels too grave, or an example too dangerous. Sometimes Louvois is ſent by the king to prevail upon them to be friends; ſometimes the king himſelf conjures them not to hate each other. 'It is eaſier for me, ſaid he, to 'give peace to all Europe, than to give it 'to two women.'

He was often a witneſs to their quarrels, and often an arbitrator between them: Madame de Maintenon was ſeldom condemned. The woman who is no longer loved, is always the aggreſſor towards the object of a beginning paſſion. The king happening to find them one day extremely angry with each other, inſiſted upon knowing

ing the cauſe of their quarrel. 'If your 'majeſty, ſaid madame de Maintenon, 'will ſtep into this cloſet, I will inform 'you.'

The king complied, and madame de Maintenon began by giving him a lively repreſentation of all ſhe had ſuffered, and ended with repeated intreaties, to diſpenſe with her from living any longer with a lady who was cruelty itſelf. 'Cruelty, 'cried the king, ah! how can that be? 'whenever ſhe hears of any calamity, 'I always obſerve her eyes full of tears. 'And I, reſumed madame de Maintenon, 'perceive that your majeſty is ſtill enſlaved 'by her. Ah! Sire, is it thus you keep 'the promiſe you made to monſieur Boſ- 'ſuet, to the queen, to your people, to 'God? She weeps for the unhappy, how 'many does ſhe make ſo!'

The king intreated her not to leave the court yet. 'And muſt I then, ſaid ſhe, 'be condemned to ſtifle the grief I feel 'at being obliged to paſs my life with two 'perſons who live in a ſtate of actual ſin, 'and who give to Europe the ſhameful 'ſpectacle of a woman who is unfaithful 'to her huſband, and a man who has 'taken away the wife of his neighbour by 'force.'

She repreſented to him, that honour required ſhe ſhould throw herſelf into a convent, that by being ſhut up in Vaugirard, ſhe ſhould only ſacrifice her liberty, but by ſettling at court, ſhe ſacrificed her reputation: that ſome particular perſons knew what part ſhe acted in it, but that the publick might ſuſpect her of being an accomplice in the irregularities ſhe was a witneſs of. The king aſſured her that his preſent engagement ſhould not continue long, and doubtleſs was deſirous of telling her that he deſigned to enter into another.

Madame de Maintenon was become as neceſſary to him as ſhe was to the duke du Maine. Ever ſince her return from Barege the king had appeared eaſy, chearful, and deſirous of continuing ſo. He was already of an age to ſeek in the ſociety of women for amuſement, rather than pleaſure. In the converſation of madame de Maintenon, of which abſence had taught him the value and the neceſſity, he found what he wiſhed; he hated devotees, and did not ſuſpect madame de Maintenon to be one. The great art of being always miſtreſs of herſelf, the ſtill harder art of judging of mankind without too great confidence in her own penetration, or too much delicacy in her notions; the talent of regulating her conduct according to ſome fixed and certain views;

views; the habit of obſerving every thing and of taking advantage of all; theſe were the qualities which diſtinguiſhed madame de Maintenon from all other women who endeavoured to pleaſe him. She knew the king, and knew how to amuſe him, the firſt was eaſy becauſe his character was ſtrongly marked: the ſecond was difficult becauſe there was great languor in his diſpoſition, great delicacy in his taſte. She never appeared before him but with the graces of ſoftneſs and good humour; with tender anxiety for the duke du Maine; compaſſionate propoſals for the poor; complaiſant attention to ſtories a thouſand times repeated, and with the appearance of a higher and new taſte for uniform amuſements. Every day ſhe ſeemed more worthy of eſteem, each virtue of hers gave riſe to new ſentiments in the king; in her he ſaw unblemiſhed chaſtity, candour without harſhneſs, and piety without ſcruples: and it was by concealing part that ſhe made him reliſh the whole.

What were her deſigns, it will be aſked, by this ſolicitude to pleaſe? Her deſigns were ſuch, as a virtuous mind may indulge, which is not wholly free from vanity, and ſlightly touched with ambition. She was deſirous of being eſteemed by the court while ſhe continued in it, and of being regretted by it when ſhe retired.

She conſulted the abbé Gobelin upon the laſt converſation ſhe had with the king. The abbé comparing the good ſhe was able to do at Paris, with that which ſhe might poſſibly do at court, decided that ſhe ought to remain there. The duke du Maine indeed was a ſtrong attachment, and the king's eſteem formed a new tye, but when ſhe called to mind the inſolence and rage of madame de Monteſpan, every conſideration gave way to the reſentment excited by that remembrance. She declared her extreme reluctance to her confeſſor: ſhe acknowledged the cauſe of it: he ordered her from God himſelf to ſubdue that reluctance: he ſhewed her the particular deſigns which heaven had upon her, attributed to a miracle of grace the growing tenderneſs of the prince for her, as if the mere human effects that were produced, were not ſufficient to explain their motive.

Nothing more ſoothes the vanity of the human heart, either in great proſperity, or diſtreſs, than the notion (injurious perhaps to the Divinity) of the immediate aſſiſtance of the ſupreme Being. In one of thoſe moments of fervour, madame de Maintenon perſuaded herſelf that God had deſtined her to convert the king; and that ſhe might be near him to carry on this great work, ſhe ſubjected herſelf to all the petulant humours of madame de Monteſ-

pan:

pan: her pride, which was wounded by this ſubmiſſion, was ſoothed again by the notion, that her actions were under the particular direction of the common father of the human race.

She reſumed, with ardor and delight, the education of the duke du Maine: the abbé Gobelin, to eaſe her of part of her cares, engaged la Fontaine to write thoſe fables which will live as long as there are children to educate, and men to judge of the moſt proper means; and to quiet, in ſome degree, her ſcruples, promiſed to be god-father to the firſt prince that madame de Monteſpan ſhould bring into the world.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Year 1675.

MADAME de Monteſpan, always haughty, capricious, and imprudent, by forcing the king to fear her, ceaſed to poſſeſs his love. The king lived with her in that reſtraint as fatal to ſatisfied, as favourable to deſiring love.

He was conſtantly employed in preventing, by tender aſſiduities, thoſe ſallies

of rage which it is eaſy to ſuffer, and thoſe ſharp railleries which it is difficult to forgive.

Frequent returns of the rheumatiſm, which the baths of Bourbon and Vichi had not been able to cure, increaſed the peeviſhneſs in the temper of the miſtreſs, already ſo unequal, and ſo dependent upon every alteration in the weather. Lewis never ſpoke to her but with the extremeſt caution, never ventured to oppoſe her but with the gentleſt perſuaſion: this attention to pleaſe, this fear of offending, were often repaid with ſudden and unforeſeen guſts of ill humour. The king often tired with her caprices, but always patient, treated love with dignity, and replied no otherwiſe, to the reproaches of his miſtreſs, than by haſtily quitting her; when alone, her mind was agitated with all the pangs of ambition, the fretfulneſs of ill health, vexed that ſhe was forty years old, uncertain of her place. She ſaw that there wanted only a look of approbation caſt upon another woman, and anſwered by a conſenting glance, a pain in the head, the remonſtrances of a confeſſor, a moment of repentance or diſguſt, to make it neceſſary that ſhe ſhould throw herſelf into a cloiſter.

The

The king, after hearing a ſermon preached by Bourdaloue, who uttered truths without palliation or inſolence, went to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, there he deplored his infatuation, he groaned for his ſin. Madame de Maintenon joined her endeavours to thoſe of the jeſuit, to aſſiſt the ſecret workings of grace: from that time madame de Monteſpan loſt all her intereſt in the king's heart. Bourdaloue coming to take leave of the king, 'You ſhall be ſatisfied with 'my conduct, ſaid Lewis to him, ma-'dame de Monteſpan is at Clagni.' God, anſwered the preacher, would be more ſo if Clagni was at forty leagues diſtance from Verſailles.

It was not neceſſary to animate the zeal of father Bourdaloue, no order of religious ever produced a man who more ſtrongly recommended purity of manners, and his ſermons and conduct are the beſt refutation of the provincial letters. However madame de Maintenon, and, influenced by her example, the dutcheſs de Richelieu likewiſe, had frequent converſations with him, in which they exhorted him to perfect the king's repentance, inſtructed him how to captivate his attention, and engage his eſteem, armed him with hints that were moſt likely to ſtrike him, and directed him how to chuſe favourable

moments to wreſtle ſucceſsfully with an enemy, who had cauſed one of his brethren to be reprimanded for having too well performed his duty.

The jealouſy of madame de Monteſpan kept the king in continual reſtraint: he had already ſacrificed the maids of honour to her uneaſy doubts, it was ſuſpected that they had all been diſmiſſed to preſerve the reputation of one who was the cauſe of it: but it is certain that madame de Monteſpan looked upon this eſtabliſhment as an hydra, which it was neceſſary to deſtroy at once, and fill their places with ladies of the palace, of uncommon uglineſs: mademoiſelle de Guedany * appeared at court, lively, obliging, tender, vain and ſilly. The king ſeemed to divert himſelf with her; this was enough to throw madame de Monteſpan into a fit of rage: 'She is but a child, ſaid the king 'to her. It is children that I fear, replied 'the marchioneſs, and eſpecially children 'of love.'

The counteſs de Grammont, † whoſe huſband had forgot that he had married

* Natural daughter of Henry Jules de Bourbon duke of Anguyer by the widow of the count de Marans, legitimated, and afterwards married to the marquis de Laſſay.

† Elizabeth Hamilton.

her

her in London, made ſome attempts upon the king's heart. She was eaſily removed by accuſing her of janſeniſm: in the eyes of Lewis it was not poſſible to be beautiful and an heretick.

Madame de Soubiſe became a candidate for the king's love. Her huſband ordered her to follow him to Flanders, ſhe murmured at this order, the king did not approve of thoſe murmurs, and ſhe obeyed. When ſhe returned again to court, the king obſerved, that ſhe had a greater quantity of rouge upon her face, and had a tooth leſs. Madame de Monteſpan therefore no longer feared a rival in her.

One rival was ſcarce ſubdued, when another entered the liſt; madame de Ludre ingenuouſly confeſſed her deſigns. The dutcheſs of Orleans playing one day with a compaſs, ſaid to her, 'I muſt put out 'theſe eyes that do ſo much miſchief. 'Do, madame, replied ſhe, ſince they 'have not yet done all that I would 'have them.'

Between this lady, and the dutcheſs de Richelieu there was a great connexion, which drew all the fury of madame de Monteſpan upon the latter. The dutcheſs cleared herſelf of the imputation ſhe charged her with, proteſting that ſhe repented too deeply

deeply of having been acceſſary to the king's firſt amour, to engage him in new ones. Madame de Maintenon ſaid it was not probable that the king could entertain a ſerious paſſion for a woman like madame de Ludre who had faults ſo diſguſting: ſhe was anſwered that ſhe did not yet know all the caprices of a depraved taſte, that the king loved the duke du Maine better than all his other children becauſe he was lame, and that he would prefer Madame de Ludre to all other women becauſe ſhe ſtuttered.

Madame de Monteſpan ingenious in tormenting herſelf found cauſes for jealouſy and apprehenſion even among her own relations. The marchioneſs de Thianges wiſhed to ſee one of her daughters in the place of her ſiſter, and herſelf in that of madame de Maintenon. She had given into devotion, and with ſo little oſtentation that a ſervant preſenting her wine at table, ſhe ſaid: 'This man does not know that 'I am a devotee.'

This appearance of auſterity did not prevent her from mixing in all the intrigues of the court: ſhe was enraged, at being no longer admitted to the king's private parties, and complained of the favour ſhe enjoyed, who ſucceeded to her, as if it had been an uſurpation of her right. Her two daughters

daughters madame de Nevers, and mademoiſelle de Thianges, ſeemed to her worthy of the firſt rank. They were both extremely beautiful: Lewis invited them to all his parties of pleaſure; his deſires inceſſantly wandered from one to the other, but could never fix; he loved her who was preſent, but the abſent beauty always ſeemed moſt worthy of his love.

Madame de Monteſpan hoped to guard herſelf againſt theſe domeſtick ſnares, by ceaſing to keep the king in reſtraint, and reſtoring him to the whole court. To that ſolitary life which her jealouſy had preſcribed him, ſucceeded one of diſſipation and ſplendor. The days were divided between play, hunting, ſhews and entertainments. Sometimes madame de Monteſpan, negligently dreſt, would play with the queen in her chamber, whom by a glance to the dutcheſs de Richelieu, ſhe could get rid of in an inſtant: at other times covered with jewels, followed by all the courtiers, ſhe would ſhew herſelf in all the luſtre of beauty, to amaze the ambaſſadors, to eclipſe her nieces, and fill madame de Maintenon with deſpair.

The king ſet out for the army in Flanders, and madame de Monteſpan for the waters of Bourbon: the ladies appeared emulous of the honour of accompanying her, ſhe received their ſolicitations with the

the diſdain of a perſon who is ſated with publick ſervility. She ſtaid three days at Maintenon, where ſhe received two couriers, with letters from the king, which gave great uneaſineſs to the lady of the caſtle. The marchioneſs affected to make a myſtery of what theſe letters contained, and madame de Maintenon, who tho' very deſirous of quitting the court, was not willing to be diſmiſſed from it, was afraid that her diſgrace was concerting even in her own houſe. She was at length relieved from her apprehenſions, by madame de Monteſpan, who was more capable of malice than treachery.

When the king returned, the favour of madame de Maintenon, and the rage of madame de Monteſpan were increaſed. The queen uſed her utmoſt endeavours to keep the firſt at court, and to give the ſecond a diſguſt to it. She ſometimes carried them with her to the monaſteries, to accuſtom one to the world, and the other to retirement. One day when they attended her to the convent of the Carmelites, madame de Monteſpan propoſed a lottery, and ſent for every thing which ſhe thought could be uſeful to the nuns: theſe pious ſiſters had ſome ſcruples about receiving preſents from the miſtreſs of the king: the Agnus's, crucifix's, chaplets, all theſe ſacred trifles ſeemed polluted by the impure

impure hand that offered them. That they might accept of them with ſafety they permitted the marchioneſs de Monteſpan to pay for the lots, and intreated madame de Maintenon to diſtribute them. Siſter Louiſa of the houſe of Mercy, won a Magdalen. Madame de Monteſpan looked at the image, and was greatly affected; thoſe torn and diſhevelled hairs, thoſe claſped hands, thoſe eyes ſwimming in tears, that countenance in which was expreſſed the extremes of ſhame, love, hope, and fear; the preſence of Valliere who was all this, the ſhame at being now what Valliere had been, her former wiſh to imitate in her repentance, her whom ſhe had more than imitated in her ſin; the hope of preſerving like her the charms of her perſon, or of adding to them the inſinuating ſoftneſs of grief, the ſilence of the whole aſſembly, attentive to the progreſs of theſe reflexions, or aſtoniſhed at the ſalutary artifices of grace, altogether threw madame de Monteſpan into a perplexity and uneaſineſs, but ill diſguiſed under a forced gaiety, and augmented by the queſtions ſhe aſked madame de la Valliere. 'Tell me, I beſeech 'you, ſaid ſhe, to her, are you as happy 'as you are reported to be?' 'No, an-'ſwered the Carmelite. I am not happy, 'but I am contented. And you, madam? 'As for me, replied madame de Monteſ-'pan, I am neither the one nor the other.

'See

'See there the difference, interrupted ma-
'dame de Maintenon, between Mag-
'dalen a penitent, and Magdalen a
'ſinner.'

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan being wholly diſconcerted, put an end to a lottery in which all the black billets fell to her; but as ſhe was preparing to leave the convent ſhe entered into the moſt trifling converſation imaginable, and affecting great ſprightlineſs and unconcern, ſhe aſked madame de la Valliere what ſhe ſhould ſay from her to the brother of the duke of Orleans, 'All that you pleaſe,' replied the Valliere with the ſenſibility of a lover and the indifference of a Carmelite.

Madame de Maintenon at length obtained permiſſion to ſpend a month at her own eſtate: ſhe did not take with her to this agreeable receſs thoſe friends of a day who in others ſtill love nothing but themſelves, but her old acquaintance to whom ſhe was always faithful; Montchevreuil, la Tourte, Nantouillet, Barillon, Coulanges, amiable philoſophers, in whom gaiety was not deſtroyed, but corrected by wiſdom. Courtin was deſirous of being of this party, madame de Maintenon told him ſhe had no room for his footmen. 'Ah Madam, replied Courtin, at court

'there

'there is always room for footmen, but 'none for friends.'

Some perſons accuſed her of making herſelf inacceſſible to all thoſe who recalled to her remembrance the diſtreſſes of her youth, or who were likely to ſolicit her intereſt. Others attributed her taſte for retirement to a deſign of getting free from her friends and relations: thoſe by whom ſhe was moſt eſteemed, were ſurpriſed at a temper ſo reſerved and unſociable, ſuſpended their judgment of her conduct, and exclaimed: 'who can be de-'pended upon, if it be true that ſo good 'an underſtanding as hers has not been 'able to guard her againſt the intoxica-'tion of vanity?

Theſe cenſures increaſed her love of retirement, ſhe ſtole herſelf from the aſſiduities of thoſe unjuſt men, whoſe expectations and importunities betrayed an intereſted friendſhip. Tired of adoration ſhe ſhut herſelf up at Maintenon: driven from thence by the murmurs that purſued her to that retreat, ſhe appeared again at court, where ſhe found only ſervile courtiers, and diſcontented friends. Her pride was leſs flattered by the homage paid her by the former, than her candor was offended at it; and the injuſtice of the latter excited leſs indignation than grief.

The

The kindneſs the king expreſt for her conſoled her for all this uneaſineſs. Lewis ſpoke of her as his ſecond, and ſometimes as of his firſt friend, but the flatterers by repeating thoſe obliging things almoſt made her hate them. Every one ſeemed to give way to her newly acquired power; ſhe diſpoſed as ſhe pleaſed of all who belonged to madame de Richelieu. This dutcheſs forced her to accept the homage paid her by the ladies, one would bring her her gloves, another would preſent a napkin to her on her knees, and died with deſire to kiſs her charming hands; this lady would help to undreſs her, that would lull her to ſleep. All were ſolicitous to pleaſe her, and tired her with civilities. Madame de Richelieu maintained that ſhe ought to aſſume great ſtate and reſerve, 'You muſt forget, ſaid ſhe to 'her, what you have been, if you would 'make others forget it.' Madame de Maintenon did not long give way to this intoxication of vanity, ſhe enjoyed her preeminence, and laughed at the ingenious ſervility of the ladies, and at her own weakneſs in having permitted it.

Mean time Paris was full of diſcourſe upon the heighth of favour to which madame de Maintenon had arrived: a viſit paid by the duke of Orleans at Maintenon, a ſhort abſence of madame de

de Monteſpan, occaſioned by a ſudden fit of capriciouſneſs, by the fatigue of the ceremonial, by a ſlight indiſpoſition, gave room for various conjectures; nothing eſcaped remarks at court, tears, frowns, joy, affectation, all were differently explained; they obſerved with prejudice, they judged with the ſame; they ſaw ſmiles of ſatisfaction in the countenance of madame de Maintenon, clouds of grief on that of the marchioneſs de Monteſpan. Some wiſhed for a change, others feared it; the greater part were perſuaded that it was already reſolved on. Madame de Maintenon was by many perſons accuſed of ingratitude, but no one ſuſpected her virtue. The marchioneſs de Sevigné, who was a witneſs of all theſe different cenſures, has preſerved them to us faithfully: according to her madame de Maintenon was not even ſuſpected of aſpiring to the place of madame de Monteſpan: ſhe was afterwards ſeen in a much higher, but without being charged with making uſe of any efforts to obtain it, without being ſuſpected of laying ſchemes for it, or of purchaſing it by guilt. It muſt neceſſarily be that the reputation of madame de Maintenon was very ſolidly eſtabliſhed, that it ſuffered not the ſlighteſt taint in a place where actions may ſometimes eſcape criticiſm, but where intentions are always judged of with malignity.

Madame

Madame de Monteſpan convinced that ſeeming favour often produces real, exerted what intereſt ſhe had ſtill left in the king's heart to regain all that ſhe had loſt: although oppreſt with the moſt violent deſpair, ſhe affected an exceſs of gaiety: ſeemed more ſecure than ever of the power of her charms, tho' ſhe repined at their decay: ſometimes a negligent dreſs expreſſed her confidence in them, ſometimes the moſt ſplendid ornaments ſhewed how well that confidence was founded; ſhe would one day receive the adorations of her lover with indifference: the next, ſhe would lean her head familiarly on the king's ſhoulder, with an air as if ſhe had ſaid, I am more beloved than ever.

CHAPTER IX.

The Year 1677.

EACH day brought with it new teſtimonies of the king's eſteem for madame de Maintenon. In thoſe entertainments he gave in the country, he would not ſit at table but aſſiſted in ſerving all the ladies, although his whole attention was fixed upon one object. He was afraid of the jealous looks of the miſtreſs he had, and

and was awed by the ſeverity of her whom he wiſhed to have.

Madame de Monteſpan perceived all that he endeavoured to conceal from her: but jealouſy cannot prevent what it fears: ſhe durſt not accuſe madame de Maintenon of loving the king, ſhe accuſed her with the crime of being loved by him, deprived her lover of pleaſures, and reproached him leſs with his paſſion than his ſin. The king who trembled leſt this inclination ſhould be thought ridiculous, was charmed to find it judged only criminal. He was now diſpenſed with from making a formal confeſſion, ſecure of being believed, he denied it but faintly, and madame de Monteſpan by her imprudence and her rage, did all that the king had in vain attempted to do. Madame de Maintenon would never have known that the king loved her, if the marchioneſs had not informed her: madame de Monteſpan ought to have repreſt the idea, and by raillery and contempt, placed it in the claſs of impoſſibilities.

Lewis had not yet renounced the hope of triumphing over the chaſtity of madame de Maintenon: he reſolved to hazard every thing, yet had not power to ſpeak. When at a diſtance from her he did not think it poſſible that ſhe ſhould reſiſt

reſiſt him, when he was with her, he had not courage to make the attempt: thoſe hopes with which his rank inſpired him, were deſtroyed by that awe and timidity which the preſence of acknowledged virtue impreſſes.

One day when he had made a party for hunting, he wandered from his train, and went to ſurpriſe madame de Maintenon in her caſtle: ſhe had left it but a few moments before, the king imagined ſhe fled from him, and this ſuſpicion increaſed his hopes: he went to Maintenon again ſome days afterwards, and then ſaw how fatal an ill timed reſpect was to love.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan was overwhelmed with deſpair at the idea of what theſe gallant ſurpriſes indicated. She exclaimed againſt the ingratitude of madame de Maintenon, but ſhe did not reproach her with having ſacrificed her virtue. She is too wiſe, ſaid they at Paris, to raiſe the ſtandard of ſuch treachery with ſo little hope of enjoying the fruits of it long; if ſhe opens the way to inconſtancy ſhe will ſerve but as a path to others that are younger and more beautiful than herſelf. Such was the reaſoning of inquiſitive perſons, who have imperfect informations but are very ready to draw conſequences from

from them, who are incapable of attributing to virtue what may be laid to the account of prudence, and revenge themſelves on favourites by falſehood and malignity.

Madame de Maintenon, calm and reſigned amidſt the agitations that ſhook the court, ſeemed to her friends wholly indifferent, and to the king ſuperiour to all paſſions. Madame de Monteſpan herſelf ſaid to Lewis, 'Sire, this woman will lead 'you further than you imagine.'

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan, eager to enjoy the little time ſhe had to reign, gave a looſe to luxury, and ſated every paſſion. Madame de Maintenon was not able to conceive how a woman immerſed in vice, with eyes all wild and wandering, cheeks glowing with paſſion, a trembling hand, and unquiet heart, durſt raiſe her head, and inſolently brave the publick hatred and contempt. She grieved to ſee the king give to the affairs of ſtate, and the neceſſities of his people, an exhauſted body, and weakened mind, and, if the expreſſion may be allowed, the remains only of what he had been.

Madame de Monteſpan, who ſought to keep Lewis from all other women, detached him only from herſelf: ſhe gave him

a taſte for true happineſs, by ſhewing him the emptineſs of falſe pleaſures. He loſt the little eſteem he had hitherto preſerved for a miſtreſs ſo looſe and ſo abandoned: thoſe charms once cer ain of awakening his deſires, now found him cold and indifferent, and he was almoſt as free from the ſurprizes of paſſion, as from the tenderneſs of real love. Habit ſometimes brought him back to her, for whom he no longer felt any thing but contempt.

Mademoiſelle de Tours, and the count de Toulouſe, were the laſt fruits of this expiring paſſion. Lewis was ſo much aſhamed of having violated the promiſe he had given his people, that madame de Monteſpan lay in with as much ſecreſy as at firſt. Madame de Maintenon would not accept the care of theſe children, and both father and mother were rejoiced at her refuſals: the king becauſe he hoped ſhe would have more time to give him, madame de Monteſpan, becauſe ſhe thought that being leſs attached to the court, ſhe would leave it ſooner. The children were concealed and brought up by madame d'Arbon, wife to monſieur le Tellier's intendant.

Madame de Maintenon was agreeably employed in the care of the duke du Maine, his health daily improved, and his ripening wit began to fulfil thoſe hopes which madame

madame de Maintenon had with pleaſure entertained: his perſon was extremely lovely, his governeſs had known how to load him with careſſes without ſpoiling his temper, and to inſpire him with modeſty, without repreſſing his vivacity. Seeing from his window one day the duke de Montauſier paſſing by, he cried out, *See the enſign of authority, monſieur de Montauſier:* words which painted exactly this auſtere nobleman.

The prince of Condé chiding the little duke for the noiſe he made when he was at play, 'Would to God, monſieur, replied 'the child, that I made as much noiſe as 'you do.' Madame de Maintenon exhorting him once to correct ſome little haughtineſs in his behaviour, recommended to him to imitate the king, who ſhewed more complaiſance to every one than he did. 'It is eaſy for him to be complai-'ſant, anſwered the prince, he is ſure of 'his rank, and I am in doubt of mine.' Theſe firſt ſparks of wit fell upon a heart already burning with love for the governeſs, which by imperceptible degrees was aſcending to the greateſt heighth.

Fagon thought another journey to Barege was neceſſary for the prince. The king would have diſpenſed with the attendance of madame de Maintenon, who, as fond

of liberty as Lewis was of ſeeing and hearing her, indulged her tenderneſs for the young prince, whom ſhe could not reſolve to be abſent from, and prevailed upon the king to conſent, that ſhe ſhould go with him. Monſieur d'Aubigné, who was then at Coignac, ſhewed his reſpect and attachment to his ſovereign, by the reception he gave the duke du Maine: this was the only ſatisfaction, which during the courſe of a long life, he ever gave his ſiſter. The letters of madame de Maintenon ſhew the joy ſhe felt, when ſhe found herſelf again in the midſt of her family: yet ſhe only ſaw relations who were either poor, ridiculous, or hereticks: but her candor was not deſtroyed, tho' her taſte was refined.

At Murcay ſhe made a diſcovery which proved very uſeful to her: ſhe there found the *ſecret memoirs* of her grandfather, and in the character of that illuſtrious man, ſhe found the greateſt part of her own virtues and defects: like him, ſhe was open, ſevere, impatient, diſintereſted, incapable of ſoothing the paſſions of others. It has been ſaid, that the ſoul of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné paſſed into the body of his grandaughter: the qualities of our minds are hereditary, and the order of ſucceſſion is not perceived, becauſe it is not always regular. Thoſe memoirs furniſhed

madame

madame de Maintenon, with agreeable ſtories to tell the king, and gave her an opportunity to ſhew him that her birth entitled her to a higher ſtate than that ſhe had been in. The Mortimarts, whom Lewis had made peers and marſhals of France, were greatly inferiour to a hero of the laſt age: He admitted, with eager delight, thoſe ideas which gave dignity to the object of his ſecret paſſion, already ſo reſpectable in his eyes, and exclaimed ſo much the more againſt the injuſtice of fortune to madame de Maintenon, as ſhe had ſeemed wholly reſigned to it.

What ſervice might not the abbé de Vertot have rendered to both, if he had publiſhed theſe memoirs which he had in his hands! the merit of the grandfather would have wholly effaced the remembrance of the burleſque huſband.

The king was exceſſively concerned at the continual diſputes between the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, and madame de Maintenon: he had occaſion for the former to keep the latter at court, who upon the leaſt diſcontent, ſecluded herſelf from all his parties, and languor inſtantly took her place. He reconciled the two ladies, and drew up a treaty of peace, by which they mutually promiſed to love each other; they ſigned it, and hated no leſs. The word

of women is not more ſacred than that of kings, hoſtilities were renewed, but with more regard to the laws of decorum.

Madame de Maintenon hoped to remove the jealouſy of the miſtreſs by keeping herſelf retired with the duke du Maine. She employed herſelf in making a collection of his themes; ſhe had already made a very pretty one of his little occaſional ſallies of wit, and all who read it were ſurpriſed to ſee him ſo lame, yet ſo forward, ſo full of vivacity, yet ſo ſenſible and ſo prudent: this little book had appeared under the title of *miſcellanies, by an author of ſeven years old.* It contained ſeveral billets, in which there was always ſomething delicate and eaſy, of ſelect pieces of hiſtory, and of maxims and reflexions. The following is one of the reflexions. *Although I ſhould cenſure myſelf, yet I will ſay it, princes are delighted when they receive preſents, but are not ſo well pleaſed when they beſtow them.* Monſieur le Ragois had introduced in it ſome brilliant things: madame de Maintenon ſuppreſt them, and nothing remained but the graces, and ſimplicity of childhood.

The epiſtle dedicatory made a great noiſe, it was conceived in the moſt delicate manner imaginable: the king and his miſtreſs were there praiſed to exceſs, but without

without ſervility or meanneſs. Bayle admired three dedications: in my opinion, after reading this, only one is worthy of admiration. It was attributed to madame de Maintenon, her name was not put to it: but what other perſon than the governeſs to the prince had a right to preſent this book to madame de Monteſpan, and to addreſs her with that familiar air, that tenderneſs for the young prince, and friendſhip for her? This dedication was thought by ſome perſons, to be too elegant, too correct for the work of a woman, but the education of the duke du Maine had given as high an opinion of her underſtanding as it had coſt her application and fatigue. However ready people are in our days to ſuſpect female authors of lending their names to the performances of men who have never publiſhed any thing equal to what is attributed to theſe ladies, yet no one will now endeavour to deprive madame de Maintenon of the ſole fame of this ingenious trifle, ſince this collection of her letters has given an idea of the ſtrength of her underſtanding.

CHAPTER X.

Of CHARLES D'AUBIGNE'.

MADAME de Maintenon gave her family the firſt fruits of her favour at court: ſhe loved her brother with extreme tenderneſs, ſhe urged him to raiſe the depreſt name of d'Aubigné by ſome noble exploit. Hers was not a blind and partial affection, it was a maſculine friendſhip, which would have cured him of his faults, if conſtitution had not been more powerful than the advice of the ſiſter, and perhaps than the will of the patient.

Charles d'Aubigné made his firſt campaigns in cardinal Mazarine's regiment, where he was an enſign, and in the king's where he was a lieutenant. Louvois, being inceſſantly importuned by madame de Maintenon, gave him two companies, one of infantry, and another of horſe, and named him to the government of Amersfort, a little town in Holland, which the king had lately reduced under his ſubjection.

Lewis in all the towns he took, eſtabliſhed the exerciſe of his religion with a rigour, which could not but enrage a people whom the haughty Spaniards had made free: it has

has been ſaid that he conquered for the church, as much as for France. The officers who commanded in theſe places, imitated his zeal, and thoſe who were deſcended from hereticks imitated him beſt. D'Aubigné diſtinguiſhed himſelf at Amersfort by his ardour to convert the calviniſts, and by his ſeverity in oppreſſing them; he treated them with that inhumanity, which makes Rome and France be deteſted. The citizens complained of their cruel governor to the marquis Ruvigni deputed general of the reformed churches. Madame de Maintenon being informed of her brother's rigorous conduct, ſhe wrote him a letter which may be found in this collection, and which to the ſhame of this age it is ſtill neceſſary to repeat. 'Be favourable to the catholicks, ſays 'ſhe, and be not cruel to the huguenots. 'They are in an error, but in ſuch a one 'as we ourſelves have been, in which 'Henry the fourth long was, and many 'great princes ſtill are. Jeſus Chriſt 'made proſelytes by gentleneſs and per-'ſuaſion. It belongs to prieſts to convert 'men, God has not given to ſoldiers 'the care of ſouls.' Maxims like theſe we admire in the preface to de Thou's hiſtory: madame de Maintenon in a flight of generoſity hit upon a truth, which de Thou found by deep reflexion. Wiſe and good men were then ignorant of the power which princes have ſince claimed over the

conſciences of their ſubjects. They could not imagine that the church had a right to bring back her children to her boſom, by all methods indifferently, and to force by the rage of Diocletian thoſe who reſiſted the perſuaſions of Saint Peter. Tolleration was not then the remains of proteſtaniſm.

Amersfort was almoſt as ſoon abandoned as taken, and d'Aubigné was made governor of Betfort in Alſatia: there he procured the love of the people at the expence of his fortune, which he wholly ruined, his ſiſter however paid all his debts.

Ambition and diſcontent followed d'Aubigné every where: he aſpired to employments which he was not capable of filling, and inſtead of enjoying that mediocrity, which the beginning of his life ſcarce flattered him with a hope of, and which he had not acquired by his own merit, he tormented his ſiſter with importunities to exert all her intereſt in his favour. Madame de Maintenon uſed her utmoſt endeavours to fit him for an exalted ſtation: but all her advice, all her cares were ineffectual. She was never able to cure him of thoſe city-like airs of magnificence, thoſe ſallies of falſe courage, that affectation of importance in his looks and words, his ſtrange and unaccountable whims, his taſte for

for low company, and a thouſand ridiculous follies that reflected back upon her. Finding it impoſſible to raiſe him, ſhe endeavoured to enrich him, but ſuccedeed no better in this deſign than the former: d'Aubigné would ſpend in a few hours thoſe ſums which his ſiſter had been ſeveral months ſoliciting for him.

His deſires were as extravagant and irregular as his expences. He loved women, and his choice of miſtreſſes could not excuſe this paſſion: None but thoſe unhappy wretches, whom publick proſtitution had conſigned to infamy and diſguſt, were the objects of his adoration. One of thoſe miſtreſſes brought him a ſon which was educated in the caſtle of Maintenon, and died in poverty *: ſo deſtitute was d'Aubigné of affections as well as virtue.

Madame de Maintenon, ſeeing that age did not correct her brother's failings, hoped that marriage might produce ſome alteration in him. Her friends were ſolicitous to find him a wife, even Louvois offered him one out of his own family. He had no eſtate, therefore the government of of Coignac, in Saintonge, was given him, which was worth ten thouſand livres a year. He ballanced a long time, between

* He was named Charles: he died in 1713.

the ſeveral matches that were propoſed to him: and his ſiſter was ſo very indifferent with regard to his choice that ſhe could not be accuſed of either aſpiring to make him a half lord, or of ſeeking for herſelf the ſupport of a grand alliance. D'Aubigné after having offered himſelf to two rich old widows, one of whom thought he ſet too high a price upon his perſon, and the other expreſſed a diſlike of him, after having adored a mademoiſelle Cavelier, or a hundred thouſand crowns, which were her portion, and diſdainfully refuſed a madame du Bourg who would have carried him back to America, appeared at length to be wholly attached to mademoiſelle de Floigni: fifteen years, an agreeable perſon, great tenderneſs, and a fortune of a hundred thouſand francs could not fix him: when the marriage was upon the point of being concluded, he broke it off publickly.

Mademoiſelle Pietre the daughter of an attorney was propoſed to him, he married her without conſulting his ſiſter, who finding the evil without remedy, approved this match as if it had been made by herſelf. The defect of low birth was not what afflicted her: mademoiſelle Pietre had neither wit, beauty, nor fortune that could excuſe this unequal alliance; and never had the pride of madame de Maintenon more to

ſuffer,

ſuffer, than on the day that ſhe was obliged to introduce madame d'Aubigné to the dutcheſs de Richelieu, and the marchioneſs de Monteſpan. All who belonged to her ſeemed to oppoſe her elevation, and at court where envy takes the advantage of every thing to overthrow a riſing favourite, a baniſhed grandfather, an infamous father, a burleſque huſband might have been forgot, if not recalled to remembrance by a ridiculous brother, a contemptible ſiſter-in-law, and relations who were not fit to be owned.

While madame de Maintenon ſought only the certainty of an agreeable life, ſhe had cultivated the affection of all her family; but when fortune ſeemed willing to raiſe her to an exalted ſtation, ſhe by degrees broke off all intimacy with them, and ceaſed to ſee them without ceaſing to do them ſervice. She dreaded leſt ſhe ſhould be oppreſſed with all the nobility of Poitou; already they began to boaſt of being allied to her by marriages, tho' they really were not; theſe allies pretended to be of her family, and her family aſked for every thing that became vacant. Madame de Maintenon ſet bounds to their graſping views, which they ought to have preſcribed to themſelves, rendered their circumſtances more eaſy without making them more ſplendid, placed the merit of their ſervices

in a juſt light, without importuning thoſe who were able to reward them, and deſpiſed their murmurs.

That ſhe might keep all at a diſtance, ſhe began with thoſe who were deareſt to her, and ſent her brother and his wife back to Coignac. They returned to Paris from time to time, but the ſlights they met with at court, drove them back again; however madame de Maintenon entered into all their affairs with more tenderneſs than from her behaviour to them they had reaſon to expect: ſhe gave them advice, ſhe undertook their buſineſs, ſhe ſet new ſchemes for profit on foot, and her brother had all the advantage of them. There was in this method of enriching herſelf ſomething mean and ignoble, which added to her extreme reluctance to play the part of a ſolicitreſs. Although the miniſters and even the king were acquainted with all this, yet ſhe was accuſed of ſelling her intereſt, of ſetting a price upon all offices and employments, and of afterwards accounting to madame de Monteſpan for the ſale, of placing her money with that of the marchioneſs in foreign banks, to ſecure it, in caſe they were diſgraced, againſt the conſequences of an enquiry into the methods by which it was raiſed, of having an office of intelligence in Paris wherein were ſettled the different prices of a recommen-

commendation to monſieur Colbert, of a petition preſented to the king, of an affair already finiſhed, of one begun. If the prince or the miniſter either by chance, through prejudice, or a powerful ſolicitation, confered a poſt on one whoſe merit gave him no title to it, this was charged to the venality of madame de Maintenon. It was her who for twenty thouſand crowns had made Daquin firſt phyſician to the king, and for a hundred thouſand francs had made Brunet farmer general of the revenues. She it was that engroſſed every thing. Thoſe who were diſappointed in their expectations, became diſaffected to the government, and attributed the refuſals they had from the court to the ſecret ſprings put in motion by their richer rivals. There is nothing, ſaid they, to be had, from the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, but through madame de Maintenon, and from madame de Maintenon all muſt be purchaſed with money. In this manner did the publick treat the moſt diſintereſted and moſt benevolent woman of her age: and thus ſhall we always treat the favourites of our kings.

Madame de Maintenon was informed of theſe injurious reports, ſhe was apprehenſive that they would at laſt reach the king, ſhe trembled leſt ſuſpicion ſhould be taken for proof, and refuſed to be concerned

cerned in any affairs that were propoſed to her. It is ſo natural for a perſon who has once been in diſtreſs, to fear being reduced to it again, madame de Maintenon had ſo ſtrong a propenſity to economy, and the deſire of amaſſing money is ſo intimately connected with this propenſity, ſo many examples ſeemed to authoriſe venality, that the diſintereſtedneſs for which ſhe was remarkable and appeared at firſt to be the conſequence of prudence only, was in reality the effect of an unbiaſſed candor. The ladies began to live in a ſcandalous familiarity with men of buſineſs; thoſe from whoſe ſnares the comptroller general, the intendants of the Finances, and the farmers general eſcaped, cringed to their ſecretaries and clerk; they gave them advice, they propoſed new taxes, they ſold their intereſt, they ſold their virtue, they ſold the blood of the people, and the moſt induſtrious part of the nation was oppreſt by the faireſt.

The king being ſurpriſed that madame de Maintenon never aſked for any thing, often aſſigned her brother gratuities upon grants already made. D'Aubigné always came to Paris to diſſipate theſe ſums. In vain madame de Maintenon ſtruggled with her tenderneſs to give him ſuch a reception as ſhould force him to return to Coignac; ſhe could not prevail either by

prudence

perſuations or coldneſs. D'Aubigné loſt at the gaming table all the money which the king had given him, and all that he ſtill hoped to obtain. D'Aubigné being one day at the gaming table, and ſetting great heaps of untold gold upon the cards, the marſhal de Vivonne entering ſaid: 'there is no one but d'Aubigné who 'can play ſo high.' 'Becauſe, replied 'd'Aubigné with great rudeneſs, I have 'received my marſhal's ſtaff in money.'

Madame de Maintenon was as ſolicitous to conceal the great favour ſhe was in with the king, as d'Aubigné was to publiſh it every where, as if it was merit enough to be her brother. He uſed often to ſay very extravagant and very imprudent things of the high favour ſhe was in, which were repeated with ſome alleviations to her: to repair this raſhneſs, ſhe was obliged to impoſe upon her beſt friends: ſo that Paris ſent news to Verſailles which puzzled the moſt inquiſitive and moſt penetrating courtiers.

Madame de Maintenon was grieved that ſhe had not in her whole family a man whom ſhe could produce with honour to herſelf. Lewis, who upon her recommendation had entertained an eſteem for d'Aubigné, hated him as ſoon as he knew him, and this hatred grew ſo violent that nothing

nothing more fully proved the aſcendant madame de Maintenon had over him than his conferring upon d'Aubigné afterwards the order of the Holy Ghoſt and the government of Berry. La Bruyere in his characters has painted him exactly.

'His cloaths, ſays he, glitter all over 'with gold, the handle of his ſword is 'an onyx, on his finger he wears a large 'diamond ring, with which he dazzles 'the eyes; he never wants any of thoſe 'curious trifles which are worn as well 'through vanity as for uſe: he is no 'longer without all that gawdy apparel 'for which a young man has bartered his 'liberty: we will at leaſt look upon his 'fine things, however let me have the 'cloaths and the jewels, and let who 'will have the perſon *. He deſcends from 'his coach with great noiſe and buſtle, 'he puſhes away the crowd, he makes 'himſelf a free paſſage, he ſcratches at 'the door, he almoſt knocks, he tells 'his name, the crowd now begin to breath 'again: he enters with them, he raiſed 'envy before, and now he excites com-'paſſion.' * In a word madame de Maintenon was the idol of the court, and the count d'Aubigné was the jeſt of it.

* Chap. 2. of perſonal merit.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.

Madame de Maintenon's converſation with the king.

THE king ever ſince the birth of the count of Toulouſe, had treated madame de Monteſpan with great coldneſs and indifference; madame de Monteſpan in her vexation ſwore never to lye in more, and took meaſures to lye in again. Louvois and Marſillac who had always foreſeen whom they were to obey, contributed to bring madame de Maintenon into favour, while that favour gave them no umbrage; but when they perceived the rapid progreſs it made, they uſed their utmoſt endeavours to overthrow it. Madame de Maintenon ſcorned any dependance upon them; and madame de Monteſpan was now in a ſituation to excite their pity, and to acknowledge their ſervices: but they conſidered that if their efforts in her favour ſhould be ſucceſsful, her gratitude would be of little uſe to them, becauſe the king having apparently loſt all tenderneſs for his miſtreſs, he would for the future have more reſpect for her, than compliance with her will. But

nothing

nothing is ſo pleaſing to men in power and in favour, as Louvois and Marſillac were, than to ſee the place where miſchief may be done, filled by a woman who can neither do good nor harm.

Madame de Maintenon was attentive to all the ſecret practices of two plotters, who made her ruin the firſt ſtep towards the accompliſhment of their ſchemes; but either through generoſity, or a diſtruſt of her own power, ſhe confined herſelf to warding off the blows they aimed at her, and would not openly break with her enemies, or reduce herſelf to the neceſſity of ruining them in her turn. However they ſeemed to have no apprehenſions of a rupture, but ſapp'd without caution the foundation of a favour, the ſingularity of which ſhewed them conſequences to be feared, and was in their opinion a violation of all the laws of cuſtom, and decency: for if ambition deſpiſes prejudice when its own gratification is in view, it is inceſſantly enforcing it upon the minds of others.

Marſillac was continually endeavouring to leſſen madame de Maintenon in the eyes of the king, whom he ſo often diverted with tales of the burleſque criple, that it was plain he was not afraid of offending her. Madame de Maintenon

uſed

uſed to bluſh when the converſation took this turn, but inſtantly endeavoured to atone for this weakneſs by laughing like the reſt of the company: the king's good nature and ſenſibility made him ſuffer greatly from the deſigned blunders of Marſillac, the malignant pleaſure of madame de Monteſpan, but eſpecially for the embarraſsment of madame de Maintenon. Scaron was ſo often brought upon the ſcene that the king at length perceived the intention of Marſillac in entertaining him with ſo many ſtories of the burleſque poet, and by the gravity with which he heard them, ſhewed him that he did not make his court well: his reſpect for the widow made him no longer think the huſband ſo humorous. Madame de Maintenon, either to harden him againſt thoſe ideas which Scaron awaked in a delicate mind, becauſe he was not philoſopher enough to deſpiſe them, or to ſpare herſelf the torture of conſtraint, would ſometimes when ſhe was alone with the king, turn the diſcourſe upon *the queen's patient*, ſpoke leſs of his jeſts than his infirmities, and gave the king to underſtand that ſhe had been his ſervant rather than his wife. Lewis received without difficulty theſe impreſſions which favoured the nicety of his love.

Louvois attacked madame de Maintenon in a place leſs ſenſible indeed, but weaker. He accuſed her to the king of entering into all the cabals of the court either through curioſity, or ambition, and even ventured to ſay to him, 'It 'is madame de Maintenon who is the 'cauſe of all, or at leaſt who boaſts 'herſelf to be the cauſe.' If theſe words had been believed they would have ruined madame de Maintenon, but the king who had diſtruſt enough in his temper to hate a woman that buſied herſelf in ſtate affairs, had too much of it not to ſuſpect a miniſter. When he examined madame de Maintenon, he ſaw, or thought he ſaw an extreme moderation in her, and in Louvois an extreme jealouſy; ſo that from his love of juſtice, joined to the mortification he felt at having been almoſt impoſed upon, he became inacceſſible to every thing that tended to leſſen his eſteem for her. He had ſupported her againſt Marſillac through compaſſion, againſt Louvois through juſtice, againſt madame de Monteſpan through inclination; he ſupported her againſt all the reſt through honour, and from that time madame de Maintenon had with Lewis no other advocate but himſelf.

She now hoped more than ever that ſhe ſhould be able to convert him. The devout

vout ſee the finger of God, where the wiſe ſee only that of man; ſhe attributed to a miracle of grace, an indifference common enough after long poſſeſſion. Theſe pious ideas excited her to purſue her ſcheme, and to look upon all opportunities of advancing it, as contrived by providence itſelf.

The king having made a review of his houſhold ſeemed to be very well pleaſed with it, praiſed the Mouſquetaires particularly, but obſerved that madame de Maintenon was very penſive during the whole time. In the evening he aſked her the reaſon of it, for every action, or look of hers, began to be intereſting to him. Madame de Maintenon told him that a thought had ſuggeſted itſelf to her and tormented her during the whole review. The king preſſed her to tell him what it was. 'I fancied, ſaid madame de Maintenon 'ſmiling, that thoſe Mouſquetaires which 'I then ſaw were all authoriſed libertines, 'and that their captain was not much 'better.

The king going aſide from the company exceſſively diverted with this notion, madame de Maintenon followed him, and when ſhe ſaw herſelf out of hearing, ſhe ſaid to him, 'You may laugh, Sire, as 'much as you pleaſe: but you love your mouſ-

'mouſquetaires: If any one of them had 'robbed his neighbour of his wife, and 'you were made acquainted with his 'crime, I am convinced, that although 'he was the braveſt man in the troop, 'although the woman he had raviſhed 'were the moſt infirm of her ſex, yet you 'would not ſuffer the guilty Mouſquetaire 'to lye this night in the palace.'

Lewis had given way to his ſcruples, ever ſince he found his paſſion decaying: theſe words entirely ſtifled his love, and awakened his remorſe, which increaſed to ſuch a degree as to diſturb his imagination with the image of Uriah, demanding his Bathſheba from him, and reproaching him with having ſtolen her innocent, and returned her defiled.

CHAPTER XII.

The imprudence and fall of Madame de Monteſpan.

1697. MADAME de Monteſpan neglected nothing to re-eſtabliſh herſelf in her place, and Lewis uſed every endeavour to diſingage himſelf from her. She was apprehenſive that the birth of the count de Toulouſe had been the cauſe of ſome ailment

ailment which had diſguſted the king. She was imprudent enough to ſeek for an explanation, and the king cruel enough to confirm her ſuſpicions. This converſation happened one day when the king had returned from hunting and was all over in a ſweat. Madame de Monteſpan ſtill more wounded by the calmneſs with which he had inſulted her, than at the inſult itſelf, replied in a rage, that it was but reaſonable he ſhould ſuffer her defects, ſince ſhe had ſo long born with his, and reproached him with one which ambitious love ſometimes tollerates, and which ſenſual love never can excuſe. This ſtroke went to the king's heart, he never could forgive it, madame de Monteſpan on her knees, embraced thoſe feet whoſe bad ſmell ſhe had exclaimed againſt; the king raiſed her without expreſſing either hatred, love, or compaſſion, and now the compariſon of the Mouſquetaire was underſtood in all its energy.

End of the FIFTH BOOK.

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

Madame de Maintenon *is made dame d'*Autour *to the dauphineſs.*

1680. THE dauphin's marriage put all the court into motion. The houſehold of the dauphineſs was to be formed, and the firſt employments in it were not more eagerly ſolicited than the others. It was publickly reported that madame de Maintenon would have a place of conſequence. Her wit alone, ſays madame de Sevigné in one of her letters, is ſufficient to raiſe her to any ſtation.

The dutcheſs de Richelieu from being lady of honour to the queen, was appointed lady of honour to the dauphineſs. The king

king thought her qualified to regulate the family of the princeſs, and to baniſh from thence all intrigue, ſince having grown old in it herſelf, ſhe knew better than any other, the arts, the dangers, and the folly of it. But either with an intention to form the dauphineſs, or to be a check upon the lady of honour, he thought it neceſſary to fill the ſecond poſt with a woman of untainted virtue, and incorruptible fidelity. Madame de Maintenon had not yet acquired conſideration enough, for the poſt of dame d'Autour, however it could not be better filled up than by her. The king durſt not venture to give her this place, yet could not prevail with himſelf to exclude her from it: he was extremely delicate in matters of decorum, and exacted ſo great an obſervance of it from his court that he thought himſelf obliged to obſerve it himſelf.

Madame de Maintenon had no longer any pretence to continue there. The duke du Maine was now entirely confided to the care of the marquis de Montchevreuil his governor. It was neceſſary that the king ſhould reward her ſervices by an agreeable eſtabliſhment, and to her taſte for a monaſtick life, oppoſe a duty which would attach her to the world. To reconcile the dictates of his love with the regard he owed to publick decency, he created the poſt of

ſecond dame d'Autour, and offered it to madame de Maintenon, with that graceful obligingneſs which enhances the value of a benefit, and gives modeſty no pretence for a refuſal. The poſt of firſt dame d'Autour was given to the lady of the marſhal de Rochefort. Madame de Maintenon in great confuſion at the thought of becoming the equal of a lady whoſe rank was ſo ſuperiour to hers, intreated the king to conſult madame de Rochefort before he took any reſolution, that ſhe might be aſſured that lady would feel no reluctance to ſerve with her. The king did as ſhe deſired, and madame de Rochefort anſwered like a perſon full of gratitude, to him who had given her her place, and of eſteem for her whom he was deſirous of aſſociating with her.

It was alledged that every thing which concerned the houſehold of the dauphineſs had been ſettled between the king and madame de Maintenon, and that ſhe had named madame de Rochefort for the poſt of firſt dame d'Autour of whoſe conſent to her having the ſecond ſhe was aſſured of before. However that may be, the court did not ſeem ſurpriſed at this elevation. The duke de la Feuillade making way though the croud of thoſe who were congratulating her upon her preferment, ſaid to her. 'Madam, permit me to make

'you

'you my compliments upon this new 'honour, for I do not pretend to have had 'any part in it.'

Madame de Maintenon ſolicited * the king to give madame de Montchevreuil the poſt of governeſs to the maids of honour, an eſtabliſhment the king was deſirous of preſerving to enliven the court, which devotion, and the auſtere countenances of the ladies of the palace began to make melancholly enough. This poſt was below the birth of the marchioneſs de Montchevreuil, but the king made her amends by annexing particular honours to it, ſuch as free entrance at all times into the apartment of the dauphineſs, a place in her coach, the firſt rank in the houſe, and the right of attending at the toilette, in the abſence of the dames d'Autour, with all thoſe trifles, which at court are of ſuch infinite importance.

The maids of honour were not handſome; in the choice of them, beauty had been carefully avoided: they were, mademoiſelles de Laval, de Biron, de Tonnerre, de Rambures. Two aimable foreigners were afterwards added to the number. Miſs Hamilton and miſs Levingſton: the birth and beauty of theſe young Ladies were not their greateſt merits.

* Sevigné's letters, December 13, 1679.

All the houſhold of the dauphineſs went to Seleſtadt to receive her: but only the ſecond dame d'Autour, and the firſt almoner, went from thence to meet her. The princeſs of Bavaria conceived a prodigious idea of the wit of the French court, from the converſation of madame de Maintenon and monſieur Boſſuet, but on her arrival ſhe ſoon found cauſe to alter her opinion. She had a fine underſtanding, ſhe loved the arts, and underſtood them, but never patronized them. 'You have never told 'me, madam, ſaid the king to her one 'day, that the dutcheſs of Tuſcany, your 'ſiſter, is extremely beautiful.' 'How 'ſhould I remember, replied the dauphi-'neſs, that my ſiſter has all the beauty of 'the family, when I have all the good for-'tune of it?' She had that deſire of pleaſing, which, in a private perſon, would appear coquettry, but which, in a princeſs, ſupplies the want of beauty: Sanguin, after he had ſeen her, ſaid to the king, 'Sire, 'be not diſguſted with her, at the firſt 'glance, and you will afterwards be 'pleaſed with her,' and Sanguin was right.

Madame de Maintenon was now freed from her ſlavery; from the moment that ſhe was placed about the dauphineſs, ſhe quitted madame de Monteſpan, who could

no

no longer ſay, as ſhe had often done, 'if 'ſhe is reſolved to leave the court, who 'hinders her?' Madame de Maintenon was lodged in the appartment of mademoiſelle de Tours, one of the king's daughters, by the marchioneſs de Monteſpan. The king gave her that which had belonged to madame d'Elbeuf, and ſome days afterwards a chamber above his own, that he might, with the more freedom, enjoy a converſation which relieved him from the flatteries of his courtiers, and the empty gravity of his miniſters *.

Madame de Maintenon was at firſt apprehenſive that her poſt about the dauphineſs, would ſubject her to the ſplendor, the pleaſures, and the luxury of a court, for all which ſhe had an invincible diſlike: but the dauphineſs loved nothing but ſolitude; after the firſt diverſions and entertainments, her apartments had rather the air of a monaſtery than a court, which gave madame de Maintenon an opportunity of reſigning herſelf up to that retirement which ſhe had promiſed to God, and the abbé Gobelin, without dreading the cenſure of an affected ſingularity.

She had alſo feared that her elevation would appear ridiculous, and that her for-

* Memoirs of the princeſs de Monpenſier.

mer low condition would be but too often remembered; but that diſadvantage was repaired by ſuch a graceful humility, and ſo well effaced by the juſtly merited eſteem of the king, that no one diſapproved of his choice, but the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, who was enraged that the widow of Scaron had dared to become her equal. Madame de Maintenon appeared publickly at court with as much eaſe and dignity, as if ſhe had been uſed to it from her earlieſt years, and acquitted herſelf of all the little duties of her office, with a grace that ſhewed ſhe was born only for the higheſt grandeur.

With that happy talent of captivating the affections, which ſhe poſſeſſed in ſo great a degree, it was not difficult for her to gain the favour of her miſtreſs, haughty and capricious as ſhe was. Madame de Rochefort laboured under an ill ſtate of health, the dutcheſs de Richelieu gave way to languor, and was at length fated with the court, and left madam de Maintenon at liberty to conciliate the affection of the princeſs: always attentive to every thing that could pleaſe, ſhe never neglected the moſt inſignificant trifles, or diſdained to perform the loweſt offices. The dauphineſs had remarkable thick hair, which none of her women could comb to pleaſe her. Madame de Maintenon alone

alone was able to diſintangle it, without giving her any pain. She reigned unrivaled at the toilet, where the king was often ſeen; yet his affection for the dauphineſs was not ſo ſtrong a motive for theſe frequent viſits, as his inclination for the dame d'Autour. 'It is ſcarce credible, 'ſaid ſhe often afterwards, how greatly 'the talent of combing hair dexterouſly, 'contributed to my elevation*.'

Madame de Maintenon loſt a diſcretion to the dauphin. She ſent him a cane, the head of which was a pomegranate of gold and rubies: the crown on the top, when opened, ſhewed the picture of the princeſs his wife, and beneath it were wrote theſe words: *il piu grato naſconde.* This emblem was formerly made for the counteſs de Grignan: it was then thought an hyperbole, but for the dauphineſs it was a truth.

Madame de Maintenon ſaw the king every day, without being perſecuted by madame de Monteſpan: the enmity between theſe two ladies was now carried to the greateſt exceſs; madame de Monteſpan enraged, to ſee her accoſted by every one with a reſpectful awe, to ſee her in poſſeſſion of ſo much power, that ſhe re-

* Sevigné's letter May 31, 1680.

ceived from the miniſters, that court which all others paid to them; inſinuated to the dauphineſs that the king's extreme aſſiduity in viſiting her, had no other motive but the deſire of ſeeing madame de Maintenon: the dauphineſs happening to complain that the viſits ſhe made the king, however ſhort they might be, were always interrupted by a private converſation between him and madame de Maintenon, which ſeemed to be ſufficiently intereſting: the marchioneſs de Monteſpan took this opportunity to awaken her jealouſy and pride, and dwelt much upon that negligence with which the king, when he came to ſee her, would throw himſelf into an eaſy chair, and upon the affected reſerve of madame de Maintenon, who always placed herſelf at the other end of the room. 'You are ſurpriſed, madam, continued 'the marchioneſs, at the favour your dame 'd'Autour is in, what would you be if 'you knew the former part of her hiſto-'ry*?' And then the lame huſband was introduced, the importunate petitions of the widow, the lovers without number, ſervices repaid with inſolence, ambition under the maſk of humility, treachery in-

* Sevigné's letters July 7, 1680. There is a letter from madame de Coulanges to madame de Sevigné, which that lady ſent to her daughter the counteſs of Grignan, in which all theſe things are explained.

ſtead

ſtead of gratitude, and all that malice and envy could ſuggeſt to a woman, who was in deſpair for having ſo uſeleſsly made all France a witneſs of her guilty love, and grief.

Theſe unfavourable impreſſions were never effaced from the mind of the dauphineſs, who always treated madame de Maintenon with reſpect, but never loved her. The king was ſo enraged with his miſtreſs, for her malice, that he excluded her from the *medianoche* †, and madame de Maintenon would no longer viſit her. Madame de Monteſpan in vain ſeemed aſtoniſhed, that a ſimple recital of facts ſhould be imputed to her as a crime, ſhe would have been diſmiſſed from court, if monſieur Colbert had not ſpeedily effected a reconciliation *, but wholly incapable of ſuppreſſing her reſentment, ſhe declared publickly, that the king would be ſoon tired of a woman who attempted to alter the ſweetneſs of his diſpoſition; yet being ſenſible that nothing tended ſo much to weaken reſpect, as appearing to be at variance with perſons who were actually in favour, whenever ſhe met madame de Maintenon, ſhe ſpoke to her with ſo

† A term which the French have borrowed of the Spaniards, to ſignify a repaſt of meat which is eat at midnight, when a fleſh-day begins after a faſt.

* Sevigné's letters July 7, 1680.

much tenderneſs, ſuch an appearance of familiarity, that their quarrels were ſtill confined to the inner parts of the palace. It happened one day, that they were obliged to go in the ſame coach together, to take the air, 'let us get in, ſaid the marchioneſs 'to her, but we will not be the dupes of 'this diſſimulation: let us converſe together like friends, when we return, we 'will reſume our hatred and our quarrels.'

This court-truce was violated as ſoon as propoſed, 'I dreamed, ſaid the marchioneſs to madame de Maintenon, that *the grey cat** was diſmiſſed, and that the king 'and I were reconciled, even in your 'apartment.' 'And I alſo have had 'dreams, replied madame de Maintenon, 'you and I methought were upon the great 'ſtair-caſe of Verſailles: I went up, you 'deſcended: I raiſed myſelf to the 'clouds, and you went to Fontevrault.'

Theſe frequent ſarcaſms at length fixed them in an averſion to each other, which made all attempts to reconcile them impoſſible. Madame de Maintenon was not ſo apprehenſive of the malicious efforts of the marchioneſs, as of the ſecret machinations of the abbeſs of Fontevrault, who, aſhamed of the guilt, yet charmed with the dignity of her ſiſter, had declared that it was better to undermine the dame d'Au-

* Mademoiſelle de Fontanges.

tour,

tour, by making her ridiculous, than to attack her openly by loading her with aſperſions. Madame de Maintenon was warned of her enemies deſigns, ſhe defended herſelf only by her prudence and circumſpection, but wholly indifferent with regard to her place at court, ſhe often ſaid, 'if they fail in their attempts we will 'laugh at them; if they ſucceed we will 'ſuffer with fortitude.'

CHAPTER II.

The Chambre-ardente, or Burning-court.

THE dauphineſs became pregnant, but the public joy was interrupted by an event which proved that our manners were not yet wholly free from barbarity.

From the time that the marchioneſs de Brinvillieres was condemned to the ſtake, for having made trial of her poiſons upon ſome of her neareſt relations; poiſoning was the ſubject of all converſation: terror and anxiety filled the minds of the people; the courtiers lived in perpetual fears and diſtruſt. They never eat without trembling; all ſudden deaths were attributed to poiſoning. Crimes the moſt difficult to be perpetrated, were the moſt eaſily believed,

ed, and a nation that was the leaſt capable of violent reſentments, dreaded the effects of the moſt perfidious and moſt cruel revenge: our minds too weak for that daring raſhneſs which is neceſſary for the perpetration of great crimes, were unjuſt enough to admit the ſuſpicion of them.

La Vigoureux, and la Voiſin, women who had traded in the ſpoils of indigent beauty, when they no longer found cuſtomers, quitted that dangerous trade, for another ſtill more dangerous, but more lucrative. They ſold quinteſſenſes of proved poiſons to wives and daughters, weary of the long lives of their huſbands and fathers. The people conſulted them as ſorcerers: the nobility had recourſe to them as poiſoners. At firſt they exerciſed their art with great privacy; afterwards either impelled by the greedineſs of gain, or becauſe they found themſelves ſupported by a great number of illuſtrious accomplices, they delivered their oracles publickly, and diſtributed their receipts without any precaution. At the firſt report of this wickedneſs, Paris was alarmed, but was afterwards amazed at its continuance with impunity.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan like all miſtreſſes of kings, dreaded poiſon, and Louvois had reſolved to ruin, if poſſible, all

all who were great and noble in France. They both made ſuch earneſt remonſtrances to the king, that a court of juſtice, called the Burning court, was erected in the arſenal, for the examination of poiſoners.

The marquiſs de Louvois, who believed in the power of magic, ſince he conſulted a cordelier * who was well ſkilled in devination, concerning all events of war, gave private orders to the commiſſioners, to bring information againſt the ſorceries practiſed by his enemies; he knew the extreme delicacy of Lewis, with regard to religion, and he was reſolved to make uſe of the pretence of piety, to rid himſelf of perſons, whom he could not ruin by other means, 'but ſaid one of the judges to 'monſieur de la Reynie, we ſit here up-'on ſorceries and compacts with the devil, 'which crimes are no longer proſecuted 'before the parliament; we are only to 'take cognizance of poiſoners, why then 'do we examine other criminals?'

La Reynie was aſtoniſhed that he ſhould find a man of integrity among the commiſſioners, and replied, 'I have my or-'ders.' 'Monſieur, anſwered the judge,

* Memoir manuſcripts of the biſhop of Agen, and letters from madame de Maintenon to cardinal de Noailles.

'juſtice

'juſtice admits not of letters de cachet, let 'their contents be made a law of, and we 'will obey it as well as you. We muſt 'now act according to known and eſta-'bliſhed laws.'

Some of the chief nobility were involved in this affair. La Vigoureux and la Voiſin affirmed that their dupes were their accomplices. The counteſs of Soiſſons was accuſed of having aſked what charms and incantations ſhe ſhould make uſe of, to bring back a lover who had quitted her: who was a great prince, and, ever ſince his inconſtancy to her, had loved none but low and contemptible women: to which the ſorcereſs had replied, that ſhe ſhould never regain his heart: and the counteſs exclaimed, 'then he ſhall repent 'of it.' At court theſe incautious words were conſtrued into a crime; in the city they ſaid, ſuch queſtions and threats were but trifles for a Mancini.

The counteſs of Soiſſons ſtung perhaps with remorſe, or perhaps ill adviſed by fear, ſet out precipitately for Bruſſels, and the next day ſhe was ſummoned to appear perſonally before the commiſſioners of the burning-court, the king ſaid to madame de Carignan, 'I have ſuffered the coun-'teſs of Soiſſons to eſcape, but perhaps I 'ſhall

'ſhall one day anſwer for it to God, and 'my people.'

The duke de Luxembourg being informed that the commiſſioners had a paper in their hands ſigned by him, in which he permitted the ſorcerers to make inchantments in his name, and to invoke the devil *his good friend*, ran to the houſe of father de la Chaiſe, had a long conferrence with him, and from thence went and ſurrendered himſelf to the governor of the Baſtile, where he was cloſely confined. He deſired to have a confeſſor, but was denied. He was, at his earneſt requeſt, permitted to have a book, but inſtead of Cæſar's commentaries, they gave him the Lives of the ſaints. He was blamed by the publick for not having quitted the kingdom, after firſt making a formal declaration that he would return, when ſummoned, to appear before his natural judges.

The dutcheſs de Bouillon, and madame de Tingri were ſummoned before this court, and made their appearance with a great train of relations. They were accuſed of believing in the devil, and of not beliving in God. The witneſſes depoſed that the dutcheſs went to la Voiſin, leaning upon the duke de Vendôme her lover, and holding the duke de Bouillon by the hand; that ſhe aſked la Voiſin for a little poiſon

to

to deſtroy an old diſagreeable huſband, and alſo for a charm to ſecure her marriage with a young man by whom ſhe was beloved. 'Is it poſſible, gentlemen, ſaid 'madame de Bouillon, that you can be-'lieve theſe wretches?' She appeared before this aweful tribunal, with all the fortitude of a hero; and monſieur de Luxembourg with all the weak terrors of a woman. The dutcheſs was puniſhed for her intrepidity by a letter de cachet which baniſhed her to Nerac, near the Pyreneans; and the duke for his unmanly weakneſs by eighteen months impriſonment. It was matter of ſurpriſe to all the world that he did not claim the privelege of his peerage.

The burning court rather terrified than puniſhed criminals, which were brought before it. It was at length ſuppreſſed, having been always conſidered as the tribunal where Louvois exerciſed his vengeance. De Lorge was accuſed for having made a compact with the devil, the duke de Vendôme of having conſulted magicians concerning the time when the king ſhould die: Nevers of having ſhewed to the counteſs de Soiſſons, his ſiſter, her huſband expiring.

Theſe reports fell of themſelves, but ſo many perſons had been ſeized, upon the ſlighteſt ſuſpicions, that Reynie was looked upon

upon as the inquiſitor-general of a kingdom, where, till then, neither indiſcreet ſpeeches, or criminal curioſity had been puniſhed. However, the reſult of this extraordinary commiſſion was an edict againſt poiſoning, which was of great uſe to the public.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan, who was fallen ſo low in the king's favour, that people were ready to enquire, why ſhe ſtaid at court? was deſirous of being continued there by a great poſt which ſhould give her as much dignity in the queen's houſe, as ſhe had had pleaſure in the cloſet of the king. The counteſs of Soiſſons was ſuperintendant and head of the queen's council; through ſome remains of reſpect for her, ſhe was permitted to diſpoſe of this poſt: madame de Monteſpan purchaſed it, payed the ſum ſtipulated for it extremely ill, and now believed ſhe had carried her point: but ſhe ſoon found that favourites in diſgrace, never recover their influence by holding great employments. She was even accuſed of having raiſed enemies againſt the counteſs of Soiſſons, that ſhe might adorn herſelf with her ſpoils. The queen when ſhe was informed of it, ſaid, calmly, 'it is my fate then 'to be attended by the miſtreſſes of my 'huſband.' So certain it is, that great trouble is inſeparable from great grandeur.

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.

Mademoiſelle de Fontanges.

WHILE the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, and madame de Maintenon diſputed the firſt place in the king's heart, but with unequal ſolicitude, and with different views, a rival appeared and took entire poſſeſſion of it. Mademoiſelle de Lude, had but ſlightly touched it; one night had ſeen the beginning and the end of her good fortune. Madame de Grancey had only hopes, the three, mademoiſelles la Motte-Houdancourt had attempted the conqueſt of it in vain; madame d'Harcourt had refuſed the king's offers, and ſome rambling amours ſeemed to have taken from the king the habit of ſubjecting himſelf to a ſerious engagement*: but the beauty of mademoiſelle de Fontanges, reſtored to his heart its former capacity of loving with ardour.

Mademoiſelle de Fontanges was tall, well made, her complexion of a dazzling whiteneſs, her beauty would have been

* Maria Angelica de Scoraille de Rouſille, dutcheſs de Fontanges, ſhe was born in the year 1661, and died 1681.

abſolutely

abſolutely perfect if her hair had not been red; her relations themſelves looked on her charms with aſtoniſhment, and founded great hopes upon them. From her infancy they had deſtined her to the conqueſt ſhe made, and through the intereſt of the dutcheſs d'Arpajon procured her the place of maid of honour to the dutcheſs of Orleans. Her diſpoſition was mild, a little inclined to melancholly, ſhe had the air of a queen, the countenance of a virgin ſaint, no man could look on her without admiration, few without love.

As ſoon as ſhe arrived, madame de Monteſpan ever ready to do herſelf a miſchief, ran to tell the king that the dutcheſs of Orleans had a young country girl among her maids of honour who was an exact marble ſtatue. Lewis naturally eager to ſee all beautiful perſons, needed not to be incited now; he made a party of hunting for the dutcheſs of Orleans, mademoiſelle de Fontanges was in her train, the marchioneſs de Monteſpan perceived her immediately, called her and preſented her to the king, to whom ſhe indecently pointed out her beauties with exclamations of ſurprize and admiration. Mademoiſelle de Fontanges expreſſed in her countenance and behaviour, that ſweet confuſion ſo favourable to beauty. The king at one glance, ſaw more than all the eager curioſity

rioſity of madame de Monteſpan; he thought the ſtatue very beautiful, like Pigmalion, he became in love with it, and like him he animated it; the duke de Saint Aignan ſung his triumph: all that was moſt noble contributed to his fame, all that was moſt beautiful ſerved his pleaſures.

Madame de Maintenon was oppreſt with grief, ſhe had no longer any hope of converting the king, he was likely to be enſlaved by this new paſſion for a long ſeries of years. The queen was again plunged into that exceſs of jealouſy and deſpair from which madame de Maintenon had ſo lately releived her, for the king was beginning to treat her with an appearance of confidence and friendſhip, which gave great joy to thoſe who wiſhed to ſee the royal family happy. Lewis had entertained a paſſion for a Lady whoſe huſband was extremely jealous: the queen having in vain expected him till four o'clock in the morning, ſent ſome of her ſervants to ſeek for him all over the caſtle, and afterwards throughout all Verſailles. They went in her name to enquire for the king of all the coquets and all the prudes of the court: they waked madame de Monteſpan who ſaid he had not for a long time paſſed a night in her apartments; from her they went to madame d'Hu-

d'Hudicourt who was proud of being ſuſpected, but they found it impoſſible to diſcover where the king was. The next day the whole court was full of different conjectures concerning this abſence. Some ladies inſinuated that they had had the king all night and boaſted of their happineſs. Others pretended to be angry at the affront that was offered them: madame de Monteſpan was overjoyed at this adventure; the lady who was really guilty turned all the ſuſpicions upon madame de Saint Géran, who drowned in tears, ran to the apartment of madame de Maintenon and proteſted ſhe had never been ſo highly honoured. The king was ſo much concerned at this general ſcandal that he told the queen the name of his concealed miſtreſs. The queen was extremely ſurprized, for the king had hardly ever ſpoke to the lady in publick. 'When ſhe de-
'ſigned to give me a meeting, ſaid Lewis,
'ſhe informed me of it by wearing ear-
'rings of emeralds, and when I ſolicited
'an interview, I put a diamond ring on my
'little finger to ſignify my deſires.

The king could not live without the pleaſing anxiety of love: madame de Maintenon, had exacted too great a ſacrifice, he was not yet old enough to obey, he paſſed whole hours with the fair monitreſs, he promiſed her miracles, he durſt not

not talk to her of love The converſation generally turned upon the graveſt ſubjects, Lewis tho' often tired of them yet could not keep away from her apartment.

Mademoiſelle de Fontanges had relations and friends who were extremely attentive to her intereſt. They gave her inſtructions for regulating her conduct which ſhe had great need of, for ſays the abbé de Choiſi, *ſhe was as beautiful as an Angel, but exceſſively fooliſh.* She made haſte to fulfil her deſtiny; declared miſtreſs to the king, ſhe gave herſelf up to a boundleſs grandeur: paſſed by the queen without ſaluting her, paid back with uſury the inſults ſhe had received from the imperious Monteſpan, expended a hundred crowns a month, was ſurprized that it ſhould be called prodigality, offended her friends by her indifference, aſtoniſhed even the courtiers by her ingratitude, ſhe would have had kingdoms to give away; Lewis adored her becauſe he found himſelf in her boundleſs generoſity, however he was always more ſure of her magnificence than her fidelity.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan enraged with the King for this open preference, enraged againſt herſelf for having contributed to his paſſion for her rival

ceaſed

ceaſed to perſecute madame de Maintenon, and turned all her fury upon mademoiſelle de Fontanges: that young lady had for her, her charms and the force of novelty, and againſt her all thoſe who had contributed to raiſe her fortune, and been treated inſolently by her in return; ſhe had madame de Maintenon, who often drew the king to the dauphineſs's court, where the converſation was always fine and delicate; ſhe had all the ladies who had deſigns upon the king, and the marchioneſs de Monteſpan who thought ſhe had claims to him.

Father de la Chaiſe, who governed the king's conſcience rather like a chriſtian than a devotee, had long interdicted him the ſacraments: the king amorous more through neceſſity than inclination, forced an abſolution from the father by feigning that he had quitted his miſtreſs. It was believed that the confeſſor was an enemy to adultery only, and becauſe he inveighed loudly againſt the king's amour with madame de Monteſpan, he was accuſed of favouring his paſſion for mademoiſelle de Fontanges. However the king received the communion * and there needed no more to make the publick exclaim againſt the ſacrilege.

* The king received the communion at pentecoſt: the favour madame de Fontanges enjoys is ſolidly eſtabliſhed, but what are we to think of his extreme friendſhip for the other lady? Sévigné's letters.

The duke de Mazarin, the ſame who had a wife ſo lovely, ſo aimable, and knew not how to keep her, acquired great eſteem upon this occaſion: he was pious even to folly, he demanded a private audience of the king, under pretence that he had ſomething of the utmoſt conſequence to impart to him. The audience was granted, and he told the king, he came to inform him that God had in a dream warned him of an approaching revolution which ſhould overturn the kingdom, unleſs mademoiſelle de Fontanges was inſtantly diſmiſſed. 'And I, replied the 'king, warn you to take care of your 'brain.'

Siſter Louiſa of the houſe of Mercy was informed in her retreat of this new engagement: her heart was deeply wounded by it, either through ſome remains of jealouſy which ſhe probably concealed from herſelf, or through zeal for the king's ſalvation: ſhe prevailed upon a biſhop who was related to her to expoſtulate with the king upon the extreme danger his ſoul was in. Lewis, ſurprized at the rude remonſtrances of the prelate, ſaid to him, 'You will greatly oblige me, 'monſieur, if you will confine your zeal 'to your own dioceſe.'

The diviſions that ſhook the court, ſpread a gloom over the moſt magnificent ſhews and entertainments: in the midſt of pleaſures

pleaſures, all was inventive malice, and pineing diſcontent. The king drag'd on each ſide by his two miſtreſſes, had recourſe to madame de Maintenon for relief; ſhe was not willing to encourage his viſits, yet had not power to refuſe them: *the maſter*, ſays ſhe, in a letter to madame de Coulanges, *comes every day to my apartment in ſpite of me.* He intreated her to reconcile madame de Monteſpan and mademoiſelle de Fontanges to each other, madame de Maintenon refuſed at firſt to be concerned in theſe intrigues, but ſhe yielded at length to the king's earneſt ſolicitations, and thought it not impoſſible to procure good out of the evil itſelf. One day when the king was apprehenſive that mademoiſelle de Fontanges would flame out, he conjured madame de Maintenon to appeaſe her, and to do it at any price: Accordingly madame de Maintenon went to the apartment of the favourite miſtreſs, ſuſtained the firſt ſallies of her rage, promiſed her nothing, but leſſened her pride by reproaching her with her crime, and awakened it again by ſhewing her the means of atoning for that crime. 'Alas! what muſt I do? ſaid mademoiſelle de Fontanges to her. 'Renounce the king, anſwered madame 'de Maintenon: either you love him, or 'you love him not; if you love him, you 'ought to ſuffer him to ſave his ſoul, and 'ſave your own likewiſe; if you do not

'love him, the efforts you make will not 'coſt you much pain: however that may 'be, leave the king, and you will per-'form a noble and praiſe-worthy action.'

This ſermon laſted two hours, but it was not the logick of the heart: mademoiſelle de Fontanges, vexed at the unpleaſing truths ſhe heard, exclaimed impatiently, 'it is not as eaſy to quit a 'king as to change ones linnen.' *

The king no longer eſteemed any woman but madame de Maintenon: it is ſo difficult for a ſincere friend, to avoid the appearance of harſhneſs with one who is paſſionately in love, that her frankneſs muſt certainly be accompanied with the moſt inſinuating graces ſince Lewis was never diſguſted with it. 'Whatever may be thought, whatever may be ſaid, added madame de Maintenon after relating this circumſtance, 'I have never ſaid any thing 'to the miſtreſſes of the king which 'might not be affixed to the four cor-'ners of the world.'

Mademoiſelle de Fontanges entirely effaced the marchioneſs de Monteſpan; ſhe was the diſpencer of all favours, the object of all the adoration; the ladies contended who ſhould moſt pleaſe and imitate her. One day when ſhe was at a hunt-

* Memoirs of madame de Ca.....

ing

ing party with the king, the wind had diſcompoſed her head dreſs, ſhe tied it with a ribbon the ends of which fell upon her forehead, the king was ſo pleaſed with this little ſingularity, that he intreated her not to alter it the whole day. The next day all the ladies appeared with their heads dreſt in the new taſte. From the court of France this faſhion went all over Europe with the name of mademoiſelle de Fontanges. Madame de Maintenon gave her name alſo to ſome faſhions. She was remarkable for dreſſing with an elegant ſimplicity, ſhe never uſed red, ſeldom wore gold or ſilver, either for fear of attracting eyes, or becauſe ſhe looked more lovely unadorned; her favourite colour was a half filamot which ſhewed to moſt advantage the luſtre of her eyes, her manner of dreſſing her head always gave new graces to a face that wanted no charm but the firſt bloom of youth, ſhe carried her attention to neatneſs and delicacy, as well as her modeſty, to exceſs, even ſilk garters might be diſadvantageous to the ſmootheſt ſkin in the world, ſhe uſed them ſo as to make them preſerve hers: theſe are without doubt trifling cares, but ſhe is not the moſt perfect woman, who differs moſt from the reſt of her ſex.

The king's heart was cruelly torn by the violence of his different paſſions, he gave himſelf up to Fontanges through

frailty, he returned to Monteſpan through habit, and followed Maintenon through taſte. All three were reſolved to have him entirely: the firſt was beloved, the ſecond ſtill pleaſed ſometimes, and the third was upon the point of pleaſing more than both the others. Lewis had the capriciouſneſs of love to endure, the inſolent rage of jealouſy to appeaſe, the auſterity of devotion to ſubmit to: the queen's uneaſineſs he could only gueſs at, but he ſuffered from that gentleneſs of diſpoſition which obliged her to confine it within her own breaſt: but what moſt tormented him was the ſilent upbraidings of his own conſcience, which he had been ſenſible of ever ſince he had diſcovered that he could not be a libertine and a chriſtian at the ſame time.

Madame de Maintenon played her part with moſt addreſs, it might be ſaid that ſhe had no intereſt in theſe cabals; ſhe was continually repreſenting to the lover the neceſſity he was under of breaking his chains; to the miſtreſſes ſhe endeavoured to ſhew the advantages of being at peace with each other. She at length conſoled the king, and reconciled the rivals, and ſo ſucceſsfully eſtabliſhed her ſyſtem, that at a ball given at Villers-cottrets, Fontanges appeared adorned by the hands of Monteſpan.

The marchioneſs did not long obſerve the conditions of this ſeeming peace, her

rage

rage and her deſpair broke out with new violence, ſhe exclaimed againſt mademoiſelle de Fontanges, againſt Adrets her confidant, againſt mademoiſelle l'Eſtrange, who ſided with each party, and was deteſted by both, againſt the prince de Marſillac, and the whole court. The king, to whom this exceſs of fury gave great uneaſineſs, fled from his firſt miſtreſs to eſcape the aſcendant ſhe had over him; ſtaid only a few moments with his new one, who had not wit enough to amuſe him, and paſſed whole hours with madame de Maintenon, whoſe engaging ſoftneſs became every day more neceſſary to his tormented ſoul.

Mademoiſelle de Fontanges grew pregnant; the king created her a dutcheſs, but ſhe did not enjoy her elevation long, ſhe perceived that the king's paſſion was decreaſing, the higheſt honours, the moſt laviſh gifts could not conſole her for an afternon given to madame de Maintenon. The king loaded her with preſents, ſhe now wiſhed for nothing but his heart, he gave the abbey of Chelles to one of her ſiſters; at the conſecration of this abbeſs, the hangings of the crown, the jewels, the muſick, the perfumes, the great number of biſhops that officiated, filled a country woman who was preſent at the ceremony with ſuch aſtoniſhment, that ſhe cried

aloud, 'Sure this is paradiſe! No! ma-'dame ſaid a perſon who was near, there 'would not be ſo many biſhops there.'

Madame de Fontanges contracted an illneſs in her lying in: a report univerſally prevailed that ſhe had been poiſoned by madame de Monteſpan, as if accidents in ſuch caſes were very unuſual. The wiſe believed that Fontanges herſelf had ſpread that report, that ſhe might be allowed guards; for during her ſickneſs, and even in the boſom of death, ſhe was charmed with grandeur and magnificence. The king's indifference ſenſibly wounded her, ſhe deſpiſed a ſettled revenue of forty thouſand crowns, and languiſhed for health and the heart of the king, which ſhe no longer poſſeſſed. She fell into a languiſhing decay that defaced her charms: the prior of Cabrieres undertook to reſtore her to health, but his remedies increaſed her diſorder: another kind of quack treated her ſoul with no better ſucceſs.

She retired from court, and told the king that ſhe ought no longer to think of any thing but death. She entered a convent in the fauxbourg Saint Jacques, whither the king ſent the duke de la Feuillade three times a week to bring him an account of her health, he did not even ſend a gentleman of his chamber to monſieur de Catinat.

The

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan became more jealous than ever of madame de Maintenon. 'I knew, ſaid ſhe, that I 'ſhould triumph over that ſtupid beauty; 'but againſt the charms of wit, the plea-'ſures of an eaſy and engaging converſa-'tion I am not able to contend.'

Madame de Fontanges perceiving her laſt moments to draw near, deſired to ſee the king. Lewis was apprehenſive that he ſhould be melted into a tenderneſs that would take off her attention from higher concerns, and through ſome remains of love denied her that laſt proof of it. The confeſſor, leſs ſcrupulous, aſſured him that ſhe would die in peace after this laſt interview: the zealots were enraged at ſuch an inſtance of baſe compliance in a man charged with celeſtial vengeance; however the king conſented to viſit once more his dying miſtreſs. On the day that ſhe expected him, ſhe aſked every moment whether he was come; at length the king arrived, he beheld her whom he had loved ſo paſſionately; pale, emaciated, her charming face ſo altered, that he hardly knew her: ſhe intreated him to pay her debts, and to marry her ſiſter * advantageouſly: the king promiſed to do both, their laſt farewell was very tender and moving. 'I 'die contented, ſaid ſhe, ſince my laſt 'looks have ſeen the tears of my king.'

* Her ſiſter was ſoon after married to monſieur de Molac.

She expired in these sentiments of passion, mixed with the sorrows of repentance and the confidence of faith, which God grants us at the hour of death, to prepare us for a better life, and which he sometimes suggests to great sinners, to open their eyes, that they may behold the precipice they were hurrying into. The reign of this favourite was like the reign of roses, as splendid and as short.

Madame de Montespan expressed great joy at her rival's death. Lewis, enraged at her insolent exultation, reproached her with her baseness and ingratitude, in shareing so little in his affliction, after having so largely shared in his pleasures: his imagination was continually filled with the idea of his mistress, her beauties, effaced by the hand of death, nourishing perhaps a criminal hope in the midst of the most solemn protestations of repentance, offering to God a heart still beating with guilty passion, and torn with too late remorse, miserable, perhaps for ever, and miserable through him. Struck with this horrid reflection, he had recourse to madame de Maintenon to dissipate it. 'You 'only, said he to her, are able to console 'me I am never happy but when I am 'with you.' He still found her firm, but always tender and compassionate.

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.

The duke du Maine *made prince of* Dombes.

THE princeſs de Montpenſier, grown old amidſt the intrigues of the court, ſtill conſumed in ardent deſires for Lauzun, her paſſion was obſtinate, becauſe it was lawful, or perhaps becauſe it was meanly placed, and had met with oppoſition. She ſtill flattered herſelf that ſhe ſhould be able to procure the count's liberty, and ten years fruitleſs ſolicitations had only animated her hopes. The king's reſentment increaſed with time, which weakened that of madame de Monteſpan. The princeſs uſed her utmoſt endeavours to conciliate the friendſhip of madame de Maintenon, conjured her to have pity on her misfortunes, and promiſed her all ſhe required, provided her lover was releaſed. Madame de Maintenon, inſtead of uſing theſe offers to her own advantage, reſolved that the duke du Maine ſhould be the better for them. The king and the marchioneſs de Monteſpan engaged in the ſcheme, and the princeſs de Montpenſier found the miſtreſs every day more concerned for the misfortunes of Lauzun, and the monarch more diſpoſed to favour her with thoſe 1681.

pleaſing diſtinctions, thoſe particular regards, without which, in a court princeſſes have rank, but no influence. 'Conſider, 'ſaid the marchioneſs to her often, whether you cannot do ſomething to ſoften 'the king.' She uſed to ſend her children to the princeſs, they were pretty, their innocent prattle diverted her: the duke du Maine was extremely handſome, and had a great deal of wit, the princeſs was charmed with his inſinuating behaviour, ſhe was grieved to ſee him lame: this ſentiment of pity operated powerfully upon her heart, and madame de Maintenon aſſiſted it by ſuggeſting to her little pupil a thouſand engaging arts to win the affections of the princeſs, and prepare the way for the adoption they had projected.

Lauzun ſtill employed her thoughts, his enlargement was the end of all her wiſhes, whenever ſhe propoſed any method for moving the king in his favour, Madame de Maintenon, who was attentive to all her words and actions, led her eyes towards the duke du Maine, and taught her to look upon the child with tenderneſs and with hope. If madame de Monteſpan gained a jewel in a lottery; the duke du Maine always carried it to the princeſs de Montpenſier, who fell into the ſnares that were laid for her credulity and gratitude, and beginning to entertain an extreme

treme tenderneſs for a child, who every morning wrote her the prettieſt billets imaginable, ſhe returned his diſſembled fondneſs with a truly parental affection.

Theſe artifices ſucceeded ſo well, that the princeſs at length reſolved to make the little duke her heir, provided the count de Lauzun was releaſed from his confinement, and that the king would conſent to a marriage which he had at firſt approved, and afterwards forbid. She employed madame de Maintenon to carry theſe propoſals to the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, who received them with tranſport, but inſiſted upon having them from the mouth of the princeſs herſelf.

The grandaughter of Henry IV. deſtined as it ſhould ſeem, to prove, that nothing is ſo abject as the ſubmiſſions of the Great, went to the apartment of the miſtreſs, beſeeched her to accept of the greateſt eſtate in France, thanked her for the praiſes ſhe beſtowed upon her conſtant affection for Lauzun, and entered into an abſolute engagement with a perſon who bound herſelf to no conditions in return.

The next day madame de Monteſpan told the deluded princeſs that the king was greatly circumſcribed by the letters he had ſent to the ambaſſadors after his rupture with

with Lauzun, but that to move him effectually, it was neceſſary ſhe ſhould ſolicit him herſelf. The princeſs de Montpenſier, inſtead of behaving in this interview like a woman, whoſe high birth, and immenſe eſtates, put in a condition to make a treaty, ſpoke like a ſuppliant, and Lewis anſwered like a ſovereign.

Her eyes were now opened, ſhe found that madame de Monteſpan would be from henceforward miſtreſs of her dutchies, and might make what conditions ſhe pleaſed. In her vexation at being thus impoſed upon, ſhe wrote to the duke of Lorraine, her kinſman, and aſſured him ſhe would make him her heir. That prince ſent monſieur le Bec to her, earneſtly recommending it to him, to manage the affair with the greateſt ſecreſy, on account of the ſpies, which in a manner blocked up the palace of Luxembourg. The agent entered Paris covered with rags, lodged in a garret, and having learned that the princeſs de Montpenſier went very often to hear maſs in a neighbouring church, he took his ſtand near the place where the holy water was kept, and aſked alms of the princeſs as ſhe paſſed by. The princeſs obſerving him to cloſe his prayer book with a myſterious air, was ſurprized at that motion, and deſirous to know the meaning of it. The next day the beggar opened his book,

juſt

juſt as ſhe paſſed, and ſhe read theſe words, *Sent by the duke of Lorraine*: and the following day ſhe read, as before, the direction to his lodgings.

The princeſs, who had a romantick turn, was delighted with this adventure, ſhe regulated the time and manner of an interview in a billet which ſhe gave him between two crown pieces, but her misfortune had not yet taught her caution and reſerve. She confided her ſecret to one domeſtick only and that domeſtick was treacherous: at the very moment when monſieur le Bec was preparing to go to the rendezvous, he was, by an order from the lieutenant de Police, dragged out of his garret, and ſent to lie at Bicêtre. The next day he was brought before the marquis de Louvois, whom he pretended not to know, and aſked alms of him. The miniſter ordered him to leave Paris immediately, and treated as a vagabond this private agent, who was afterwards miniſter plenipotentiary at the congreſs of Cambray, where he related all theſe circumſtances to the marchioneſs d'H.... from whom I had them.

The princeſs de Montpenſier not ſeeing the beggar any more, was apprehenſive that her letter had been intercepted, and that this ſnare had been laid for her to diſcover her

her real intentions. She endeavoured to renew her treaty with the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, who would not deign to take any notice of her propoſals. Madame de Maintenon was again ſent to the princeſs, who looking upon her as the cauſe, or an accomplice in the deſign that was laid againſt her, ſaid to her, as ſoon as ſhe appeared, *I have not a long time done you the honour to ſpeak to you, becauſe* --- Madame de Maintenon, ſurprized at ſo rude a beginning, inſtantly left the room. The princeſs ran after her, obliged her to ſtay, and yielding to neceſſity, told her in a ſofter accent, that ſhe was ready to diveſt herſelf of all her eſtates, provided ſhe would be permitted to marry the count de Lauzun. Madame de Maintenon repreſented to her that the king, to whom ſhe had made thoſe offers without conditions, would be aſtoniſhed at her preſuming to preſcribe any now, and that ſhe would do better to throw herſelf entirely upon his gratitude and generoſity. The princeſs replied that ſhe well knew what might be expected from the generoſity practiſed in courts, and that if ſhe was not permitted to marry the count, ſhe would diſpoſe of her patrimony as ſhe pleaſed: to this madame de Maintenon anſwered, that ſhe had promiſed it to the king, and that his majeſty would never permit her to diſpoſe of it otherwiſe. The princeſs burſt into tears,

tears, complained that ſhe was cruelly treated, and ſaid ſhe would give all ſhe poſſeſſed to the poor, and it would then be ſeen whether the king would force from the hoſpitals what was lawfully beſtowed upon them. 'If you reſolve to do that, 'replied madame de Maintenon, I am not 'ſure but that Lauzun will be transferred 'to the Baſtile.

The diſtreſſed princeſs, terrified at this threat, threw herſelf entirely upon the king's goodneſs, and made to the duke du Maine a donation of the ſovereignty of Dombes, and of the earldom of Eu: after which, madame de Maintenon had orders to tell her, that the count de Lauzun ſhould be releaſed, that ſhe was permitted to marry him, and to ſettle an eſtate upon him of forty-thouſand livres a year. Madame de Maintenon now aſſured her, that it ſhould be the chief ſtudy of her whole life to ſerve her, in acknowlegement for the obligations, the prince, whom ſhe had brought up, and loved with the fondeſt affection, had received from her: ſhe ſaid ſo many other tender, grateful, and obliging things to her, that this princeſs, whoſe whole ſoul was open to the ſoothings of friendſhip, was in raptures at having ſuffered herſelf to be thus ſtripped of all her poſſeſſions: a few kind words from the king almoſt turned her head,

head, and the enlargement of Lauzun compleated her intoxication.

But the man for whom ſhe had ſacrificed all, diſpelled the illuſion, and left her ſenſible only to grief, for having expoſed herſelf to the publick contempt, for the moſt contemptible man in the world: Lauzun now only ſaw in the princeſs de Montpenſier, a woman violent in her temper, imprudent, jealous, burning with impure fires, at an age when the moſt lawful flames are extinguiſhed; and in Lauzun the princeſs found nothing but folly, treachery, ingratitude and falſhood. So many obligations repaid with inſults and hate, could no more cure the princeſs of her paſſion, than ten years impriſonment could cure Lauzun of his faults.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan had been long diſguſted with her name, and had reſolved to change it; the ridiculous name of Monteſpan, ſhe ſaid, brought her ill luck, and flattered herſelf that if ſhe took another, ſhe ſhould alſo alter her fortune. She ſaw that the name of Maintenon had ſucceeded but too well, and that of Monteſpan was now deteſted by her, becauſe her huſband by his continual ſtate of drunkenneſs, had connected with it the idea of a ſot, and ſhe, by her criminal paſſion for the king, had ſunk it into contempt and deteſtation.

The

The title of Montpenſier ſounded pleaſing in her ears, and tempted her vanity. She began to treat Lauzun with a diſtinction that ſurprized the whole court, where this priſoner was almoſt forgot, and where he was not yet permitted to appear. She ſupported him againſt Louvois, who through ſome remains of jealouſy, or of hatred, amuſed the king with ſtories of the imprudence and ridiculous follies of a man, whoſe pride he had formerly dreaded. The marchioneſs declared ſo openly for Lauzun, that Louvois was apprehenſive he would be recalled to court, but madame de Monteſpan acted thus with intereſted views; ſhe had promiſed Lauzun to reſtore him to the king's favour, that ſhe might uſe to her own advantage the influence he ſtill had over the princeſs his wife, whom ſhe hoped would be prevailed upon to make over the remainder of her eſtates to her, in conſideration of a large penſion, and alſo to permit her to take the name of Montpenſier, which ſhould afterwards deſcend to her ſon the count de Toulouſe *. The princeſs had been too

* The count de Toulouſe was juſt then legitimated: Lewis IV. had conſented with ſome reluctance to thoſe publick acts which contained a confeſſion of his guilty paſſions. Henry IV. was not ſo delicate, the letters patents that legitimate the duke de Vendôme run thus, Having obſerved the great perfections and graces, as well of

too ill requited for her former conceſſions to be tempted to make new ones: ſhe rejected the propoſals in ſuch a manner as left the marchioneſs no room to hope ſhe would ever be prevailed upon to conſent to them, and Lauzun was thrown back into his former inſignificance.

The princeſs ſuffered for this fall. Lauzun reproached her with being the cauſe of all his misfortunes, and treated her with ſuch inſolent tyranny, that it is reported he one day ſaid to her, at his return from the chace, *Henrietta of Bourbon, pull off my boots*, and that the princeſs reſenting this inſolence, in very high terms, he made a motion with his foot, expreſſive of the higheſt outrage, and left her. The next day, accuſtomed without doubt to ſcenes of this kind, he came back to the palace of Luxembourg, but the wife of Lauzun having at length recollected, that ſhe had once been very near being the wife of an emperor, aſſumed the air and accent of a princeſs. 'I command 'you, ſaid ſhe, never to appear before me 'again.' Lauzun anſwered only with a profound bow *.

of body as mind, in the perſon of our well beloved Gabriella d'Eſtrees, I have choſe her from among all my ſubjects, as the moſt worthy of my friendſhip.

* Memoirs of the marquis de Dangeau.

The

The princeſs de Montpenſier, after having paſſed the firſt part of her life in the intrigues of ſtate, and the pleaſures of a court; the middle of it in amours and affliction, paſſed the end in devotion and obſcurity. She fell ſo low, and madame de Maintenon was raiſed ſo high, that the latter, in her turn, did the princeſs the honour to ſpeak to her ſometimes. Princeſſes ought to learn from this example, that it being impoſſible to avoid the inconveniences annexed to their rank, without being entangled in paſſions that ſubject them to contempt, they ought to reſolve to be miſerable with a good grace.

It has been confidently ſaid, that Lewis XIV never forgot that this princeſs had cauſed the cannon of the Baſtile to be fired upon him. One day when he was recounting to an ambaſſador, the troubles of his minority, and had proceeded as far as the ſiege of Paris, the princeſs de Montpenſier entered: 'There is my couſin, 'ſaid the king, interrupting his recital, 'who will give you the reſt of my hi-'ſtory.'

The marquis de Louvois endeavoured to keep up his reſentments againſt all that party. He procured the prince of Condé to be removed from the command of the army, by reminding the king in a critical

tical moment of his former faults. The king had already pardoned them, but they had left unfavourable traces in his mind: at a campaign in Flanders he could not help ſaying to him with ſome emotion, 'But for you, all this country had been 'mine. Ah! Sire, replied the prince, 'you have promiſed me never more to 'mention this.'

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Converts to the Roman Church.

WHILE madame de Maintenon made uſe of her favour with the king, to introduce virtue and piety into the court, the dutcheſs of Portſmouth acted very differently in England, and made Saint James's the abode of luxury and pleaſures; ſhe had long governed Charles II. by the force of her wit and beauty: no one was more capable of pleaſing, when ſhe condeſcended to endeavour to pleaſe; ſhe was in the higheſt favour, and had the moſt extenſive influence, yet all ſeemed below her aſpiring mind. The dutcheſs of Portſmouth, was probably the only woman who ſupported adverſity with fortitude, after having enjoyed proſperity with inſolence. Her connexions with France gave madame de Main-

Maintenon an opportunity to enter into a correſpondence with her.

The catholick religion was the ſubject of their letters. The dutcheſs of Portſmouth was employed to protect it in England, and Verſailles taught her the means. She thought the crimes of a ſcandalous life might be expiated by her zeal to make proſelytes to the roman church; the dutcheſs of York was infatuated with the ſame zeal, and theſe three ladies introduced into the court of London that rage for making converts, which under the following reign no longer knew any bounds, and was the cauſe of all the troubles in the ſtate. At London the depravation of manners was at its heigth, libertiniſm was the faſhion, and to ſpread it was the buſineſs of the Great, and thoſe who ruined moſt ſouls by wicked practices, were the very perſons who were moſt ſolicitous to ſave them by tenets.

The ſame ſpirit prevailed in the court of France, but vice there wrapt itſelf in ſhade, and zeal oſtentatiouſly diſplayed itſelf. The proteſtants were hated by Charles II. becauſe they oppoſed the deſpotick power of the Steuarts, and by Lewis XIV. becauſe they were enemies to the catholick religion: one would revenge his father, the other would revenge the church. Madame de Maintenon, who knew the king's

king's averſion to hereticks, undertook to convert all her relations, and began with the marquis de Villette, the ſon of that aunt who had taken care of her in her infancy. Monſieur Boſſuet, who made all the antichambers in the court reſound with the noiſe of controverſy, in vain diſputed in his preſence; the marquis de Villette was often perplexed, but was never convinced: when the divine entered into deep arguments, and drew certain inferences from them, the heretick would tell him, that ſuch wonderful eloquence only amazed, and confounded an unlettered ſailor like him, that truth only furniſhed ſimple truths, and that he could never be brought to believe a religion which he was not able to underſtand. Bourdaloue was not more perſuaſive, monſieur de Villette, always pleaded his ignorance. At length the king ſent him an order to be converted, the marquis demanded time, he was told it ſhould be granted, madame de Maintenon preſſed him to fix a certain ſpace of time for being inſtructed in the great truths of the catholick religion. 'I ſhall at leaſt 'take a hundred years, replied the marquis, 'ten to perſuade me that infallibility is 'lodged in a ſociety of men, twenty to 'accuſtom myſelf to the myſtery of tran-'ſubſtantiation: and ſo on to all the reſt.' His couſin had not foreſeen or expected ſo reſolute a reſiſtance, ſhe therefore took meaſures

meaſures with the miniſter to order the marquis de Villette upon a long voyage at ſea, that if the father ſhould periſh, the children at leaſt might be ſaved.

The marquis de Villette had two ſons, and one daughter; the ſons although very young, had ſerved in ſeveral campaigns. The eldeſt was but nine years old, when he was in the naval battle of Meſſine where Ruyter was ſlain. The child was wounded and they made him a lieutenant of the ſhip; he had ſuch fortitude and preſence of mind, that when he beheld the blood ſtreaming from his wound, he ſaid calmly, 'if my mother ſaw this, what 'would ſhe ſay?'

After the departure of monſieur Villette, whom all the alluring offers of madame de Maintenon could not fix at court, ſhe demanded mademoiſelle de Murçay of her parents: they refuſed to ſend her upon ſeveral pretences which madame de Maintenon paid no regard to, and demanded her again; but meeting with another refuſal from the father, ſhe cauſed the child to be taken away privately with the mother's conſent. The poor girl wept exceſſively when madame de Maintenon declared to her that ſhe muſt be a proteſtant. Theſe tears recalled to her remembrance the violence that had been uſed to her in

her infancy, to make her abjure a religion which ſhe afterwards voluntarily quitted, and this remembrance moderated her zeal. Mademoiſelle de Murçay was at length gained by gentle methods, and thought the king's maſs ſo fine, that ſhe promiſed to be a catholick, provided ſhe might attend every day at the king's maſs. She afterwards became a janſeniſt, and madame de Maintenon could no more pardon this ſecond hereſy, than allow her to remain in her firſt.

Monſieur de Chateau-Renaud who had with him the eldeſt ſon of the marquis de Villette, recieved orders to ſend him to court; the youth was full of fire and ambition, they made him comprehend that hereſy would be an obſtacle to the great fortune to which he was deſtined, and he inſtantly abjured it. His brother was more obſtinate becauſe he was younger, and the ſame powerful arguments were not ſo well underſtood by him, however after much preaching from the indefatigable Gobelin, he at laſt yielded. Nothing was at that time more eaſy and more artificial than converſions. The deſigned proſelyte was told at firſt that the two religions did not differ ſo much from one another as the divines of each pretended: they read to him Boſſuet's *expoſition of the catholick faith* which ſo artfully united them;

them: the hugenot was assured that he was already almost a catholick, but as soon as he had abjured, he was found to be still a hugenot; he was required to submit to all the acts of a worship, wherein he found those innumerable trifling tenets, which during his conversion they had suppress.

It will doubtless be thought very surprising that madame de Maintenon should have been so ardently solicitous to make converts; her own earnestness in her religion, led her to it, and the king's well known zeal strengthened that motive; zeal set aside paternal authority, when salvation was in question, for men belonged to God before they were subjected to their parents: it is no wonder then that it so eagerly endeavoured to convert children, when the council of our kings had just pronounced that an infant of seven years of age was capable of doing what Henry IV. thought so difficult, namely to chuse a religion, and to decide between the churches of Geneva and Rome.

The marquis de Villette made bitter complaints of madame de Maintenon at his return, and upbraided her with the obligations she owed his mother, which she had so ungratefully repaid, by using violence to the consciences of her children.

His reſentment wore off by degrees, and after having held out againſt the eloquence of the biſhop of Meaux, the promiſes of the king, and the importunities of madame de Maintenon, he went to ſea a ſecond time, and made reflexions hitherto unknown to him. The parable of the Tares and good grain appeared to him to carry clear conviction againſt the ſchiſm of the proteſtants, and he was perſuaded that it was impoſſible for meer human means to ſeparate them.

He was now fully convinced of the truth of the catholic religion, but being apprehenſive that he ſhould be accuſed of having put his conſcience to ſale, he abjured his errors privately in the preſence of the curate of his own pariſh. As ſoon as he returned to court, the king, who had often ſaid, that the marquis de Villette had no fault but that of being an heretic, loaded him with benefits, and aſſured him that he looked upon his returning to the boſom of the church as a real ſervice done to him. 'Sire, replied the marquis de 'Villette, it is the only thing that I have 'ever yet done, from any other motive 'than that of pleaſing you.'

Notwithſtanding this extreme diſintereſtedneſs, he endeavoured to raiſe his fortune by this change of religion; from a proſelyte

proſelyte he became a converter: perhaps he was deſirous of extending that faith which he believed to be the only true one, or perhaps he endeavoured to ſtifle the remorſe of his own conſcience, by corrupting the conſciences of his friends, or hoped to avoid the wrath of God and the cenſures of men, by ſheltring himſelf among a crowd of criminals like himſelf, or perhaps and this is the moſt probable conjecture, he found it eaſier to prove the ſincerity of his own converſion by his zeal to convert others, than by practiſing the great duties of religion. Madame de Maintenon ſuſpected her couſin of being governed by the baſeſt of theſe motives, and intreated him to make fewer catholics, and to be a better one himſelf. The hypocriſy of thoſe perſons who were re-united to the church filled her with horror. 'It is infamous, ſaid ſhe, to abjure 'without conviction.' But why did ſhe not always remember this maxim, which oppoſed thoſe harſh methods, that propagated the infamy, and ſeldom afforded conviction?'

The family of Saint-Hermine ſtill perſiſted in the profeſſion of the proteſtant faith. Madame de Maintenon who was abſolutely reſolved that all who belonged to her, ſhould be catholic, ſent for Meſdemoiſelles de Saint-Hermine to court, and

undertook to convert them herſelf. She dwelt much upon controverſial matters, for ſhe was not ignorant of any of the arguments that could be urged by the proteſtants in defence of their ſect. The young ladies abjured, after having made a noble reſiſtance. This appellation was always given to an obſtinacy in ſupporting what they were not convinced of, even after they were converted, or had reſolved to appear ſo, and not to yield till they had run through the whole field of controverſy, and objected to every article of the new faith that was propoſed to them. This artifice procured great praiſe to the converter, and ſaved the proſelyte from all ſuſpicion of intereſtedneſs.

However many of the d'Aubigné's were rebels, and abandoned their country to preſerve their religion. I have ſeen a daughter of that family at Copenhagen in a ſituation greatly below her birth; ſhe complained of the furious zeal of madame de Maintenon, yet always ſpoke of her with great reſpect.

The ardor madame de Maintenon diſcovered to make proſelytes, drew general hatred upon her: ſhe conſoled herſelf, for it by the hope of pleaſing God, and the certainty of pleaſing the king, whoſe eſteem for her augmented the love

with

with which ſhe had inſpired him, and reſpect for her virtue, grew with that love. She was never to be ſeen but in the antichambers converſing with Boſſuet and Pelliſſon upon religious matters, or in the churches leading ſome huguenots to the altar. It was eſteemed an honour to be converted by her. Thoſe who could not be convinced by the arguments of the divines, or reſiſted the offers of the corrupters, yielded to the ſoft perſuaſions of this amiable apoſtle: and this quality although a little abject, was a wonderful charm in the eyes of a prince ſo extremely religious as Lewis XIV. who had himſelf a great deſire to be converted, not from one faith to another, but from a vicious life to a life of virtue and piety.

CHAPTER VI.

The conduct of Madame de Maintenon *towards the Marchioneſs de* Monteſpan.

THE king to be converted thoroughly muſt neceſſarily comply with theſe two articles; he muſt quit the evil, and endeavour to repair it. The firſt was already performed, during the laſt four years he had neither ſolicited any favours

from madame de Monteſpan or expreſſed any paſſion for her. He had ſome little gallantries, but thoſe he was aſhamed of, for he ſtill loved pleaſures, but the charm was broke. The ſecond appeared to madame de Maintenon the moſt difficult to be effected. There was a neceſſity for reuniting a huſband and wife, whoſe characters were directly oppoſite, to vanquiſh the timidity of the king whoſe conſcience reproached him for the cruel indifference he had ſo long ſhewn the queen, and to ſubdue the ſcruples of that princeſs who had been accuſtomed to conſider as a virtue the continence which ſhe had long practiſed through neceſſity, and to bring under ſubjection two confeſſors, of whom one was accuſed of compromiſing too much with the paſſions, and the other convicted of ſuperſtitiouſly inſlaving them.

Madame de Maintenon took advantage of the king's fondneſs for converſing with her, to carry on her ſcheme. Without tiring him with inceſſant exhortations and reproofs, ſhe brought him to ſuch a dependance upon her, as never to reſolve on any thing without conſulting her; and this ſhe effected, either with ſhewing him by the wiſdom of her advice, the errors in that he uſed to receive from madame de Monteſpan, by making him envy the calm pleaſures of an innocent life, and the

the peace of a conſcience void of guilt, or by receiving his viſits with the perplexity and uneaſineſs of a woman who knew that the public never examines till it has paſt ſentence.

The king generally ſpent two hours every afternoon in the apartment of madame de Maintenon, talking to her with that eaſy freedom, that air of friendſhip, and ſettled confidence, which rendered this place more agreeable to him than any other. * 'Is it poſſible, ſaid the courtier, that a man can be ſo fond of the converſation of any woman with whom he is not in love?' The ladies could not conceive how one of their ſex could be the favourite of a king without ſacrificing her virtue. Madame de Monteſpan was tortured with envy and vexation. It was not thought neceſſary to baniſh her from court, the king ſaw her every day with increaſing coldneſs; madame de Maintenon, it will be ſaid, was then ſure of her own influence, and of the king's indifference for her rival; but this was not the caſe, ſhe ſtill doubted of his cure, but obſerving that his paſſion was more likely to be weakened by ſatiety than abſence, ſhe thought the continual preſence of the marchioneſs de

* Sevignés letters. Madame de Maintenon, ſays ſhe, is in poſſeſſion of a place, that no one ever yet held, or ever will again.

Monteſpan would compleat his cure. In effect the king by having his miſtreſs always before his eyes, paſſed from hatred of the ſin to contempt for her who had been the cauſe of his committing it; and madame de Monteſpan ſtill ſo beautiful, had no longer any charms in the eyes of a prince who had eight children by her, and deeply repented it.

The marchioneſs made one more effort to recal his love. The king ſhewed to madame de Maintenon a letter which he had received from his miſtreſs, filled with all the ardour of a beginning paſſion, and commanded her to tell that *unhappy woman*, (that was his expreſſion,) that he did not deſire to be any longer loved by her, and that he earneſtly recommended to her the ſame indifference for him. Madame de Maintenon executed this commiſſion with an eagerneſs, which proved that ſhe was as ſecure of her reputation as of her virtue; for if ſhe had been guilty, or ſuſpected of being the rival of madame de Monteſpan, ſhe durſt not have reproved another for a paſſion ſhe allowed in herſelf.

This ſentence was a ſtroke of thunder to the unhappy marchioneſs de Monteſpan; ſometimes ſhe exclaimed againſt her who pronounced it; ſometimes ſhe endeavoured

to

to gain her by excuſes, tears and promiſes. 'There is but one promiſe that I 'require you to make, ſaid madame de 'Maintenon to her, but it is to God, to 'the king, and to your own honour, that 'you owe it: promiſe faithfully to re-'nounce your paſſion.' 'Ah! replied 'madame de Monteſpan, I can more 'eaſily tear my heart from my breaſt.'

Madame de Maintenon when ſhe left the marchioneſs, met one of the courtiers in her way to her own apartment, who ſaid to her, 'there is a report that the 'king is reſolved to forſake women, and 'that you, Madam, have inſpired him 'with this reſolution.' 'Would to God 'it may be ſo, although I were to die this 'inſtant; ſhe replied, with the fortitude 'of a woman who in the midſt of a licen-'tious court dared to practiſe and to re-'comend virtue.'

The king was in doubt whether he ought not to baniſh the marchioneſs de Monteſpan; madame de Maintenon through compaſſion ſpared her this laſt blow, but cauſed her to be beſet by prieſts who were inſtructed to exhort her to baniſh herſelf. They could not prevail, the court was become neceſſary to her, ever ſince ſhe had been no longer neceſſary to the court. The king ſtill ſuffered her to pre-

ſerve the appearance of the higheſt favour; the courtiers muſt have an idol to worſhip, and madame de Maintenon would not be that idol.

However all ſolicitations were made to madame de Maintenon, ſhe was the diſpenſer of all favours; madame de Monteſpan ſtill fond of the appearances of power, had recourſe to her whenever a habit of aſking, or the vanity of ſhewing that ſhe could ſtill obtain what ſhe aſked, induced her to provide for her dependants. Madame de Maintenon was never able to hate or deny her: and the marchioneſs de Monteſpan now reigned by the woman who during ten years had been ſubjected to her.

Father de la Chaiſe who had not been able to purſue the motions of the king's heart, becauſe he did not yet poſſeſs his entire confidence, was afraid that he ſtill heſitated between madame de Monteſpan and virtue: and the aſcendant the miſtreſs had ſtill over him, ſeemed to inſinuate, that virtue would be obliged to yield. He therefore gave orders to the Jeſuit who preached before the king, to make the danger of relapſing into ſin the ſubject of his ſermon. This had the deſired ſucceſs. Lewis, to prevent his falling again, was deſirous of being ſtrengthned with the ſacred bread.

Father

Father de la Chaiſe, feigned indiſpoſition that he might not be obliged to take his confeſſion, but he would certainly have done better to have confeſſed and afterwards refuſed to abſolve him. The king wrote to him with his own hand, deſired him to return to court, and aſſured him that he would be ſatisfied with his behaviour. What paſſed between the confeſſor and his penitent is a ſecret, but it is certain that the king no longer continued to viſit the marchioneſs in private, tho' ſhe ſtill held her place at court.

The devotees, and even the leaſt prejudiced perſons of the court, murmured at her being ſtill ſo powerful in a place where ſhe had ſo long lived with infamy. 'Is it poſſible, they cried, that 'we can be perſuaded this commerce is 'broke off, while we ſee the lovers every 'day together? Before the reign of Fran'cis the firſt, our kings by keeping 'their amours ſecret, ſeemed tacitly to 'condemn them: their people was neither 'the victim of their guilty paſſions, nor 'the witneſs of their dotage: they durſt 'not venture to exact the homage of their 'courtiers even to a miſtreſs the moſt ar'dently beloved, and now the court is 'obliged to adore a miſtreſs, who is no 'longer beloved: to love madame de 'Monteſpan, and to give her power, was certainly

'certainly a great weakneſs; but when 'cured of that paſſion, to continue her 'influence ſtill, is criminal in the higheſt 'degree, it is to make the effect ſurvive 'the cauſe, and to honour vice is to op-'preſs virtue.'

The abbé Gobelin repeated theſe murmurs to madame de Maintenon, ſhe thought them but too well founded, yet durſt not mention them to the king, who could yet bear only half truths to be told him. It was dangerous to attempt leading a man through thorny ways, whoſe head ſtill ran upon the roſy paths of love. Lewis had quitted madame de Monteſpan in conſequence of his growing affection for madame de Maintenon: his conſcience was at reſt, it reproached him with no crime, but it was not yet delicate enough to hear what his people had to charge him with. He loved the devotee, but he hated the rigid ſuggeſtions of devotion, and would have thought the propoſal of a public affront to the mother of his children an exceſs of folly and enthuſiaſm. It was neceſſary therefore to make him virtuous, before he could be made a chriſtian.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

Madame de Maintenon's conduct towards the queen.

THE court ſet out for Chambor, but madame de Monteſpan was not permitted to make this journey: the queen found happineſs at Chambor, which ſhe little expected; in the exceſs of her gratitude ſhe beſtowed as many marks of diſtinction upon madame de Maintenon as ſhe received inſtances of reſpect from the king: ſhe flattered herſelf that ſhe ſhould ſtill pleaſe, ſuch tenderneſs, ſuch extreme attention was blended with this reſpect. 'God 'has reſtored to me, ſaid ſhe, the heart 'which madame de Monteſpan robbed 'me of, and ſo long withheld from me.'

This was the ſureſt method madame de Maintenon could have taken to ſecure and extend her influence. The queen thanked her for directing a tenderneſs to her, which ſhe might have ingroſſed to herſelf. The ladies admired a conduct which they could not comprehend: even the courtiers who had leaſt virtue, were pleaſed to find their king become virtuous, either through

through a fondneſs for change, or that being ſatiated with vice, virtue had now allurements for the moſt vicious. No favourite had ever acted like madame de Maintenon, no one was ever honoured like her. She ſaw the monarch ſubjected to her will, the queen depending upon her friendſhip, the miniſters paying court in her antichamber, and all this was ſo far from intoxicating her with pride, that ſhe was confuſed, perplexed and uneaſy at it. She raiſed herſelf to the higheſt fortune, by candidly acknowledging that a moderate one was above her, even the princes of the blood ſubmitted without reluctance to the influence of a woman, who was too modeſt or too timid to abuſe it. Louvois alone was jealous of her.

The dauphineſs did not go to Chambor, ſo that the favour madame de Maintenon poſſeſſed, appeared evidently independent of the king's friendſhip for that princeſs. The queen on her own ſaint's day gave madame de Maintenon her picture adorned with diamonds, a diſtinction which ſhe ſet the higheſt value upon. The marchioneſs de Monteſpan had never been ſo much honoured, ſhe pretended to the ſame favour, but ſhe was made to underſtand that preſents of that kind were marks of eſteem.

Mean

Mean time the king's frequent converſations with madame de Maintenon filled the court with ſurpriſe, and the city with ſcandal. Monſieur Chamarante conducted her to and from the king's apartment openly. No one ſeemed able to comprehend this new kind of favour; friendſhip never ſuggeſted ſuch extreme tenderneſs, ſuch anxious ſolicitude as the king expreſſed for madame de Maintenon: ſhe had opened a new world to Lewis, ſhe inſpired him with ſentiments he had till then been unacquainted with, he now enjoyed the pleaſures of a tender and ſolid friendſhip, without conſtraint, without paſſion and without guilt.

Madame de Maintenon often interrupted the king in a diſcourſe, perhaps too obliging for her, with reflexions on what the queen had ſuffered, and earneſty exhorted him to reward her patient virtue, with the tenderneſs ſhe had ſo well deſerved. The king ſubdued by advice ſo diſintereſted, and ſo frequently urged, would to pleaſe her, quit her immediately, and viſit the queen, whom he addreſſed with the ſame ſoftneſs he would have done madame de Maintenon, whoſe image ſtill dwelt upon his mind; but when the illuſion was gone he relapſed into his former indifference. However he now began to have a taſte for domeſtic happineſs, he was of an age when

when the paſſions begin to ſubſide, and the heart ſeeks for an object of eſteem rather than love. He looked upon the queen without diſguſt, tho' devotion had almoſt doubled her years, but in madame de Maintenon he always found charms that excited the moſt tender ſentiments; he grew every day more faithful to the queen, and every day violated that fidelity, by giving her his perſon without his heart.

The queen, by twenty years of coldneſs and indifference made a ſtranger to theſe ſoft endearments, was charmed yet confuſed, and knew no longer how to anſwer them. The king having one day deſired to ſee her, ſhe heſitated whether ſhe ſhould keep her appointment with him. Madame de Maintenon who had contrived it, attended her, and vanquiſhed her reluctance: for ſuch was the natural reſerve of this princeſs, or ſuch the awe that the king's preſence inſpired her with, that ſhe trembled and was in the utmoſt embarraſment while the interview laſted: by degrees ſhe ſubdued her ſcruples and her terrors, and a union ſo earneſtly deſired was at length complete. One of her ladies having attempted to give her ſuſpicions unfavourable to madame de Maintenon. 'Why ſhould 'I be jealous,' ſaid ſhe, to the malicious incen-

incendiary, when I never found ſo much tenderneſs in the king before?

The dutcheſs of Richelieu was a witneſs of this uncommon favour of madame de Maintenon; ſhe ſaw virtue triumphant, and lamented that ſhe had abandoned it; envy and emulation ſtifled all remains of friendſhip: ſhe alledged, that ſhe only had a right to reconcile the huſband and wife, to whoſe long ſeparation ſhe had ſo largely contributed, and as impatient to do good as ſhe had been eager to do evil, now the former was more advantageous to her intereſt, ſhe ſaid ſhe had always acted the part of a mediatreſs; that ſhe would do ſo ſtill; and if the king was deſirous of reforming, ſhe would aſſiſt and confirm him in that deſign better than any other; ſhe ſowed ſeeds of diviſion between the queen and the dauphineſs, and laid all the blame upon madame de Maintenon.

A ſimilarity of fortune, an equal attachment to religion, could not unite theſe two princeſſes. They were both devotees, both were neglected by their huſbands, and both unhappy. Yet they could not love each other; they were very ſeldom together, and even ſometimes tranſgreſſed the known rules of decorum, as far as two women of that rank could tranſgreſs them. Inſtead of attributing their mutual

mutual diſguſt to the contrariety of their temper, which was ſtill ſtronger than the ſympathy in their fates. They ſuſpected madame de Maintenon of being the occaſion of it, to whom the court was obliged for all the union that was in it.

Madame de Maintenon, whoſe ſole endeavour was to introduce peace where diſcord had reigned before, was greatly afflicted at a ſuſpicion ſo injurious for her, and reflected, with as much aſtoniſhment, upon the malignity of the world, as if ſhe had but juſt begun to know it. She was ſoon juſtified in the queen's opinion, but the dauphineſs refuſed to hear what ſhe had to ſay in her defence, jealous herſelf of the favour her dame d'Autour enjoyed, ſhe did not chuſe to be undeceived, becauſe ſhe was reſolved not to love her. Madame de Richelieu repreſented her to the dauphineſs as the moſt artful woman in the world, who uſed her power of perſuaſion to the worſt purpoſes, and conjured her to avoid coming to any explanation with her. The princeſs, already too fond of ſolitude, ſought it now more than ever. The king ſent for madame de Maintenon every day, and, to conſole her for the uneaſineſs ſhe ſuffered, went alſo every day to viſit her.

She

She was too much affected with the injury done to her character, to be made happy by this new honour; ſhe told the king that ſhe was not able to ſupport the unjuſt frowns of the dauphineſs, or to ſerve a miſtreſs who conſidered her as her enemy; that ſhe had always been ſolicitous to conciliate friendſhip, not to create enmity; that ſince ſhe was ſo unfortunate as to be the occaſion of diſcord in the court, ſhe thought it her duty to retire, and that there was nothing ſo dear which ſhe would not ſacrifice to peace.

The king was perſuaded that nothing more was neceſſary to remove this miſunderſtanding, than to oblige the queen and the dauphineſs to explain themſelves. Theſe two princeſſes had a long converſation with madame de Maintenon in the king's preſence, the reſult of which was that the dutcheſs of Richelieu was an incendiary, and madame de Maintenon abſolutely innocent. They both expreſſed great regret for having ſuſpected her, the dauphineſs carried her back with her to her own apartment, intreated her to forget what had paſſed, and the queen ever after governed herſelf wholly by her advice.

To be juſtified at the expence of the dutcheſs de Richelieu, was a new ſource

of

of affliction to madame de Maintenon. She had but one friend in the court, and that friend betrayed her. Had ſhe ſuffered this injury from madame de Monteſpan, ſhe would have borne it with leſs regret; but from the dutcheſs de Richelieu, to whom ſhe owed all, whom ſhe was deſirous of being always grateful to! it was her deſtiny then not to be able to love or eſteem her benefactreſſes. Theſe reflections, tho' juſt and reaſonable, were as fatal to her temper as to her happineſs; ſhe became diſtruſtful, and that fault increaſed with age. Every day a witneſs of a thouſand acts of perfidiouſneſs; ſhe ſuſpected every one ſhe converſed with; ſhe was afraid of being always ſurrounded with falſe friends, and behaved to thoſe who really loved her, not as if ſhe was one day to hate them, but as if ſhe expected they would one day hate her. Hence that taſte for monaſtic retirement, which ſucceeded her love of liberty; hence that extreme caution in all ſhe wrote; that averſion for engaging in affairs, for fear of being duped by artifice and falſhood: hence that perpetual combat between her natural frankneſs and a reſerve ſuggeſted by her ſufferings: and hence her favourite maxim, unfortunately, but too true; *One is every day deceived by friendſhips of thirty years duration.*

The

The king was extremely enraged againſt the dutcheſs de Richelieu, and would have diſmiſſed her from court, if madame de Maintenon had not altered his reſolution, by ſaying, 'you may poſſibly give her 'poſt to one who will behave worſe; the 'malice one knows, is leſs dangerous than 'that one knows not.'

CHAPTER VIII.

The death of the queen.

MADAME de Maintenon accompanied the king in all his journies into Burgundy, Alſace, and upon the Sarre, where he had flying-camps to keep his troops in breath and his frontiers in ſecurity. Lewis every day diſtinguiſheed her with new marks of favour, which madame de Maintenon as conſtantly improved to the queen's advantage.

In their return from Straſbourg, the queen was ſeized with a dangerous illneſs; the king appeared exceedingly grieved at it, madame de Maintenon divided her cares between the king whom ſhe comforted with a ſympathizing tenderneſs, and the queen whom ſhe attended with the moſt affectionate aſſiduity. The phyſicians

ficians having declared that there was no hope of her life, the whole court was in tears, either through real grief, or the influence of example. The dauphin, with tears and groans, desired he might be permitted to receive a last blessing from his dying mother, and the confessor did not neglect to make a spectacle so moving, and, which had so great an effect upon the King, useful to his salvation.

The queen recovering her sight and speech, asked for madame de Maintenon, who had retired to be at liberty to weep and pray. She went to the bed-side, the queen drew her ring off her finger, and gave it to her, perhaps from a secret presage of what was to happen, or that she was willing to leave her an undoubted mark of her esteem; or what is equally probable, to signify to the king the choice he ought to make, if he should one day resolve to despise prejudice, and make himself truly happy. Having now reached that moment when all but virtue and piety is nothing, she was going to discover her affection for the only irreproachable woman in the most licentious court in the world; but the words died upon her lips, and an inarticulate sound, interrupted by agonizing sighs, was only heard. Madame de Maintenon tried to suppress her grief, yet her tears would flow;

ſlow; ſhe ſpoke reaſoned a chriſtian, who ought to bear affliction with fortitude, and a moment afterwards filled the room with her piercing cries.

Such only as have carefully attended to her conduct, will believe theſe tears, and this affliction, to be ſincere, who will conſider that ſhe loſt her only ſupport at court; not merely a queen, queens are not lamented thus, but a friend, the greateſt woman in the world, to whom ſhe had done the greateſt and moſt acceptable ſervice. Let the treacherous ſuſpect, let the malignant cenſure the grief of a perſon who they are reſolved to believe had long foreſeen, and long been preparing her way to an elevation, which, at moſt, was but poſſible to imagine; eſpecially at a time, when it is more natural to be loſt in the melancholly reflections, which the view of a dying friend impreſſes upon the mind, than taken up with hopes of future grandeur. In madame de Maintenon theſe cenſurers only conſider a woman, who, from a ſtate of indigence and misfortune, was raiſed to be queen of France: they mark not the progreſſive ſteps of her fortune; they never think of her as dame d'Autour, trembling through piety, perhaps through ſtifled love, and if they will through intereſt, leſt the monarch, her benefactor, and her friend, ſhould fall again

into the ſnares of guilty paſſion, and deliver himſelf up to a woman who would make it the firſt condition of her yielding, that he ſhould baniſh the troubleſome devotee.

As ſoon as the queen * had breathed her laſt ſigh, madame de Maintenon quitted the room, and was retiring to her own apartment; but the duke de la Rochefoucoult, a favourite of madame de Monteſpan's creation, impelled by his extreme tenderneſs for his maſter, ſeized her hand eagerly, and ſaid to her, 'it is not 'now a time for you to withdraw, ma'dam, in the condition the king is at pre'ſent he has great need of you.'

Lewis however, appeared but moderately afflicted, for the queen's death: during 'five and twenty years, ſaid he calmly, 'that we have been together, this is the 'firſt uneaſineſs ſhe ever gave me.' She had ſometimes oppoſed his amours, but ſeldom complained of them, either becauſe ſhe believed complaints would not reclaim him, or that ſhe thought it beneath her to complain: for ſhe was remarkable

* Maria Thereſia, infanta of Spain, born September 20, 1638. Married at Fontarabie June 4, 1660. Made regent in 1667, and 1672, during the king's campaigns in Flanders and Holland, died at Verſailles July 30, 1683, at three o'clock in the morning, aged forty-five years.

for

for a greatneſs of mind, becoming a princeſs of her high rank, an anſwer ſhe once made her confeſſor ſufficiently proves it. The good man having aſked her, with great ſimplicity, if before her marriage, ſhe had ever felt the paſſion of love? The queen forgetting that ſhe was at the feet of a man who repreſented the perſon of her Saviour, replied with ſome emotion, 'Ah no, how could that be poſſible? there 'was no king in my father's court.'

'This princeſs was a ſaint, but a meer woman was fitter for Lewis. She was formed by nature for a carmelite, by birth placed upon a throne. She poſſeſſed every virtue, but thoſe which became her rank, and ſituation: her piety often carried her to church, when the king ſolicited a private interview; and her confeſſor, inſtead of preſcribing to her, as a duty, thoſe tender endearments, which might have fixed or recalled the king's affection, ſoothed her with ridiculous ideas of perfection, founded upon the ſacrifice of the moſt lawful pleaſures: there was not a ſurer way to give Lewis a diſguſt to devotion, than this chimerical purity. 'I always 'believed, ſaid madame de Maintenon, 'and I have ſince known, by my own 'experience, that if the king had been mar'ried to a reaſonable woman, he would 'never have violated the fidelity he owed 'her.'

CHAPTER IX.

The king's paſſion for madame de Maintenon.

MADAME de Maintenon was ſeriouſly employed in comforting the king, who only grieved through decency. She repreſented to him that ſuch afflictions were proofs of the goodneſs of God, who like a tender parent chaſtiſed the child he loved, to make it more deſerving of his love. She conjured him to renounce thoſe pleaſures he had been ſo blindly fond of, leſt heaven ſhould puniſh his reſiſtance by adverſity, or take vengeance on his guilt, by leaving him in a ſtate of impenitence. The king promiſed every thing ſhe required, but while his words expreſſed the deepeſt remorſe, his heart glowed with the moſt ardent love.

The next day Louvois went, by his order, to madame de Maintenon, with a requeſt, that ſhe would attend him to Saint Cloud; he was likewiſe directed to hinder the dauphineſs from being of this party; the king wanted to be at liberty, and the preſence of that princeſs would have obliged him to ſome reſtraint. The miniſter having

ing prevailed upon the dauphineſs's phyſician to order her to be bled; under pretence that ſhe was pregnant, adviſed her to keep her bed, and mentioned as if by chance the party to St. Cloud.

The dauphineſs declared ſhe would go, the miniſter made the condition ſhe was in, an objection, but finding the dauphineſs determined to attend the king, he pronounced theſe definitive words. 'His 'majeſty does not require theſe demon-'ſtrations of friendſhip, and the ſtate has 'need of a prince.'

The dauphineſs was exceſſively enraged when ſhe found that madame de Maintenon only was to go with the king, the whole court was ſurpriſed at a conduct ſo incomprehenſible. They could not believe that a woman of ſuch diſtinguiſhed virtue could be ſo ſoon ſubdued, nor were able to imagine that Lewis had formed the deſign, or entertained a hope of ſubduing her. Grief ſeeks to wrap itſelf up in ſolitude, but the king's grief was known to be very moderate. Is his majeſty aſhamed they ſaid, of letting his people ſee that he regrets his loſs? Or does he retire to Saint Cloud to conceal his inſenſibility? Or can he be comforted only by the ſociety of an agreeable woman?

The king ſtaid five days at Saint Cloud, and theſe five days were ſpent in affliction. Madame de Maintenon never ceaſed to weep for the queen, nor the king to ſhew her that he was more affected with her ſorrow than with the loſs that occaſioned it. But finding that her tears could not be dried up, he was not able to ſuppreſs ſome railleries, to which, ſays madame de Caylus in her memoirs, I am not ſure that my aunt did not reply in her heart, as the count de Guiche to the wife of the keeper of the menagerie, who alleged a thouſand reaſons for conſoling herſelf for the death of her huſband. *Oh! ſince you take it ſo, faith I am indifferent about it.*

The king judged of her tenderneſs for him, by that ſhe expreſt for the queen: in love, and ſure of being loved, he was tranſported to find himſelf at liberty to tell her ſo, and madame de Maintenon was, doubtleſs, no leſs charmed that ſhe might hear him. This mutual paſſion till then perhaps a ſecret to her, who had inſpired it, this tenderneſs which one had concealed under the profeſſion of admiration and eſteem, and which the other had diſſembled to herſelf, and given it the appellation of gratitude, was now going to aſſume its true form, when no longer reſtrained by fear, and painfully ſuppreſt by virtue. The queen's death ſet them free from inquietude;

Lewis

Lewis might now love without guilt, and madame de Maintenon might liſten to his vows without ſcruple.

But ſtill this was paſſion, and paſſion is always dangerous. The king's ſentiments were virtuous, but he was a lover, and love cannot ſubſiſt without hope. Madame de Maintenon had not power to ſubdue them, and perhaps did not wiſh they ſhould be ſubdued; it was enough that ſhe could ſuppreſs her own inclinations, and be able to reſiſt his. Lewis ſought occaſions to diſcover his love, madame de Maintenon avoided them, but ſtill with the deepeſt reſpect.

The king was now for the firſt time, perhaps divided, between love and virtue, and for the firſt time was perplexed: he dreaded leſt he ſhould offend the object of his paſſion, yet he was impatient to let her know his ſentiments: the death of the count de Vexin furniſhed him with an opportunity to declare them; madame de Maintenon had brought up this prince and wept exceſſively for his loſs. 'Ah! ſaid 'the king to her, what tranſport to be 'loved by one, who ſo well knows how 'to love.' He ſaid no more, and trembled, leſt he had ſaid too much. Madame de Maintenon pretended not to hear theſe words, but the king, leſs timid after this

confeſſion, explained himſelf as clearly as if ſhe had owned ſhe heard them. The joy of both may be better imagined than deſcribed; the king was charmed that he had revealed, with decorum, a ſecret ſo long concealed; madame de Maintenon, becauſe ſhe had not been deceived in her conjecture: no woman, however cold and inſenſible, can ſee, unmoved, her lover at her feet, and madame de Maintenon ſaw at hers, her king and her benefactor, the moſt aimable of kings, the moſt generous of benefactors.

When ſhe caſt her eyes upon the ring which the queen gave her in her laſt moments, when ſhe read the letters which conſoled her for the death of that princeſs, as if ſhe had been queen herſelf. When ſhe beheld the proſtrate court, whoſe homage ſeemed to direct and juſtify the king's choice, ſhe, doubtleſs, hoped a great deal from her fortune: but when ſhe recalled to her remembrance the indigence of her former condition, how could ſhe help rejecting thoſe hopes as vain and ridiculous chimera's?

Thus fluctuating between the alluring promiſes of love, and the ſevere ſuggeſtions of prudence. A ſecret enquietude preyed upon her heart, and made her hate the court, but could not prevail upon her to

to quit it. Full of too great ideas of the king, of too mean ones of herſelf, ſhe bluſhed for the paſſion ſhe had inſpired him with; ſhe thought it ſhameful to be loved at an age when others ceaſe to pleaſe, her delicacy made her dread the reproach of artifice and frailty, and ſhe was leſs ſenſible to the glory of being loved by her king, than to her grief, for the injury that paſſion might do his fame.

Her reſerve, her modeſty, her engaging ſoftneſs, added new force to the king's paſſion, he was no longer able to live without her, he could taſte no pleaſure in her abſence, with her only he converſed in private, with her he played in publick, ſhe was the ſoul of all his amuſements. If he retired to any of his country palaces, ſolitude had no charms without her; when he was with his army her image dwelt upon his thoughts; he was not able to endure the ſhorteſt abſence from her, and every ſeparation plunged him into a profound melancholy. He who has outlived the firſt ardors of youth, ſeeks not for meer perſonal beauty in the woman he loves. Lewis forgot that the object of his paſſion was no longer young, and did not wiſh ſhe ſhould be ſo. All that could be beautiful without youth and bloom, was ſtill ſo in her: her hands and arms were exquiſitely handſome, the ſofteſt ſenſibility was in her

countenance, her ſhape was finely turned, her air ſo majeſtick that ſhe eclipſed the moſt graceful women in the court: her eyes ſo bright, ſo expreſſive, that it was eaſy to gueſs what ſhe was going to ſay, her ſmile ſo juſt, that it was as eaſy to gueſs what ſhe had ſaid. Her complexion of ſo dazzling a whiteneſs, ſo animated, ſo glowing, that it was ſcarce perceived ſhe was no longer young: her wit ever new, ever lively and engaging; her boſom ſtill ſo lovely, or ſo truly gueſſed to be ſo, that at a ball a croud of maſques entering at the ſame time with her, one of them could not reſtrain his hand from ſome liberties, 'Ah! cried madame de Maintenon, it is 'the dauphin, no other man in France 'would dare to do this.' And it was him.*

It is not therefore ſurpriſing that the king ſhould conceive a violent paſſion † for a woman, whoſe beauty was always young, who repaired the loſs of bloom by the niceſt and moſt accurate choice of dreſs and ornaments, by graces which are confined to no age, by modeſty which is the firſt of graces, and by a thouſand inſinua-

* Manuſcript of mademoiſelle d'Aumale. Memoirs of the abbé de Choiſy. Memoirs of madame de Perou. Madame de Coulanges letters.

† Memoirs of the marquis de Fouquieres.

ting

ting charms which are not ſubjected to the law of time.

The coldneſs and reſerve with which ſhe treated the king, could not free her from his importunities. She often feigned buſineſs or indiſpoſition to be excuſed from the little parties of pleaſure which he propoſed to her: he ſaw through the diſguiſe, and ſeldom admitted thoſe excuſes. She abſolutely refuſed to go to Fontainbleau, during the pregnancy of the dauphineſs, and the king was obliged to exert his authority upon this occaſion, he inſiſted upon her attending him thither: it was Louvois, who with joy in his eyes, rage ſwelling in his heart, delivered this peremptory meſſage, ſo diſagreeable to him, ſo pleaſing to madame de Maintenon; charmed with the ſweet conſtraint, ſhe obeyed the impulſes of her own heart, in obeying the orders of her king, and in the duty of a ſubject found the innocent joys of a lover. By accounting in this manner to the publick for her conduct, ſhe took away from the courtiers all ſuſpicion of a guilty amour, and from the king all hope of ſubduing her.

As ſolicitous to avoid private interviews with the king, as he was eager to procure them. She intreated him to let her divide the honour of his viſits with ſome of

her moſt intimate friends, of which number were madame de Saint Geran *, madame de Ventadour, the princeſs of Harcourt †, the dutcheſs du Lude, the counteſs de Grammont, all theſe ladies ſhewed an extreme attention to her intereſts, in hopes that ſhe would not forget theirs. The king too much in love to attempt to vanquiſh theſe ſcruples, and already too virtuous not to eſteem her the more for them, granted her requeſt. He compared this conduct with that of madame de Monteſpan, who ſcarce obſerved the firſt laws of decency; while in others ſhe cenſured even innocent freedoms, ſhe indulged herſelf in the moſt ſcandalous exceſſes, and ſcrupled not, when with her lover, to throw off all reſtraint, before thoſe children whom ſhe governed with the greateſt rigor, and in whom ſhe would not pardon the guiltleſs gaiety of youth.

* N. J'o. married to Bernard de la Guiche, count de Saint Geran, knight of the king's orders, lieutenant general of his armies, he died ſuddenly, March 18, 1696. The duke de Bethune ſaid of him, *Upon the whole, Saint Geran is a very good kind of man, but it is neceſſary that he ſhould be killed, in order to be ſolidly eſteemed.*

† Francis de Brancas, daughter of George de Brancas duke de Villars, he died in 1657, aged 89 years, ſhe was married in 1667 to Alphonſo, Henry Charles de Lorraine, prince d'Harcourt, ſhe was lady of the palace to the queen, and on 1679, attended the queen of Spain to Madrid, ſhe died April 13, 1715.

The

The virtues of madame de Maintenon, when thus contraſted with her rival's vices, ſhone out with redoubled luſtre; although her perſon had not been beautiful, ſhe would have charmed the king by the qualities of her mind: the graces of modeſty, virtue and wit, are far more powerful than beauty over a heart already ſated with guilty pleaſures. Lewis was ſeized with a reſpectful awe, in the preſence of the firſt woman who loved him with innocence, who confeſſed that love without deſign, who was too ſecure of herſelf to dread his importunities, and too prudent to deſpiſe the raſh cenſures of the world. He found more difficulty in obliging her to a confeſſion of her love, than in gaining the perſon of any other woman. La Valliere, Monteſpan, Fontanges, had thrown themſelves into his arms. Maintenon received the communion every week. They exacted perpetual attentions, unwearied aſſiduities of him, ſhe repreſſed his ardours, and avoided his ſight. They tired him with importunate requeſts for their relations and dependants, ſhe only recommended the poor to his benevolence. It was by ſuch compariſons often repeated, that the king confirmed her empire in his heart. Vice can only give tranſient inclinations, virtue alone can kindle great paſſions: and not till now did Lewis begin to love.

Yet

Yet whether it was that he ſtill entertained hopes of triumphing over her virtue, or that he was anxious to let her know thoſe ſentiments, which, before ſo many witneſſes, he could only diſcover but by little cares and aſſiduities which love ſuggeſts; he would ſometimes viſit her when ſhe did not expect him: madame de Maintenon made him ſenſible, that, if he had not been her king, ſhe would have obliged him to retire, and Lewis never failed to take advantage of his being ſo, to protract an interview which he gained with ſo much difficulty. All her endeavours to keep him from her, ſerved only to increaſe his deſire of ſeeing her, and the ſimplicity of virtue, did all that the moſt refined artifice could have effected. Madame de Saint Geran aſked her once, if the king ſtill importuned her with his love? 'This paſſion, replied madame de 'Maintenon, will not be ſoon ſubdued; 'I ſend him away always in grief, but ne-'ver in deſpair.'

Their mutual paſſion was ſtill a ſecret to the court, when one day, as they were at the chace, madame de Maintenon betrayed herſelf by an unguarded expreſſion of tenderneſs. The king was thrown off his horſe, and thoſe who helped to raiſe him, cried out that his arm was broke. Madame de Maintenon burſt into tears, the

the king gazed at her earneſtly, the courtiers ſmiled, and madame de Monteſpan pretended that it ſtill belonged only to her to weep ſo tenderly for the king.

However, the king's arm had been only put out of joint by his fall, and madame de Maintenon received the compliments of the court upon his recovery, as if ſhe had a right to claim the greateſt intereſt in it. The provinces applied to her to procure permiſſion for their congratulatory addreſſes upon this occaſion. Several ladies, who had refuſed to bend to the haughty Monteſpan, did not diſdain to ſolicit the friendſhip of this new favourite. Of this number were the dutcheſſes de Chevreuſe and Beauvilliers: notwithſtanding their fondneſs for the court, notwithſtanding that Colbert their father had married their youngeſt ſiſter to the duke de Mortemar, they had, with a noble firmneſs, perſiſted in their contempt for the marchioneſs de Monteſpan, but were now charmed with having an opportunity of reconciling themſelves to their king, whom they had offended by that contempt. The homage they paid madame de Maintenon, was not conſidered by them as ſervility, in a place where virtue is ſo rarely ſeen, that even pride yields to its pre-eminence.

Madame

Madame de Monteſpan, hurried along with the torrent, applauded her conduct, while ſhe grieved for its ſucceſs.

CHAPTER X.

Colbert *and* Pelletier.

Sept. 6, 1683. THE death of Colbert gave madame de Maintenon an opportunity to try her power with the king. This miniſter was taken away by a ſudden illneſs, tho' he had long languiſhed under the grief Louvois had given him, by forcing him to ruin, by oppreſſive taxes, the people whom he had enriched by commerce *: he was the only man who ever fell a martyr to the publick good, the only ſuperintendant of the finances who died in poſſeſſion of his employment.

Before he died, he bore this noble teſtimony to the king's patience and ſweetneſs of temper, that during five and twenty years which he had ſerved him, he never heard but one paſſionate expreſſion fall from his lips †. His wife ſpeaking to him of buſineſs, even in his laſt moments, he ſaid, 'ſhall I not then be allowed leiſure to die?' The king wrote to him

* Manuſcripts of madame de Maintenon.

† Memoirs of the marquis de Dangeau.

in

in very affectionate terms, such as his long and faithful services merited: the dying man put the letter under his pillow, without opening it, 'how little are 'poor mortals, said he, affected with such 'instances of favour, when they are go-'ing to render an account of their actions 'to the King of kings.' A christian sentiment, which proved that power and riches had not lessened his piety, nor weakened his faith.

Who with juster confidence than Colbert, could present himself before the tribunal of God? Who had more good works to offer him! The labourer sowing with hope, and reaping with joy, the tyranny of the rapacious receiver repressed, the arts encouraged, the poor relieved, a hundred millions a year returned to the country, such true affection for the state, such a patient zeal, so insensible to fame, so accessible to compassion, the inflexibility of a minister to the insatiate courtier, the charity of a christian to the industrious people; to him may every good citizen address the prayer of Erasmus to Socrates, *Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis.*

The marquis de Louvois, who had long found himself waneing in his prince's favour, was resolved, at last, to make some acquisition to his power, he fell upon the spoils of the deceased minister, and

and obtained the ſuperintendance of the buildings. Madame de Maintenon could not reſiſt the deſire ſhe felt to make a miniſter, and openly favoured the party who propoſed monſieur Pelletier, formerly prevôt des marchands, her intimate friend, and, laſtly, him to whom ſhe entruſted the care of her affairs. The king, when he gave him this poſt, ſaid, 'I 'have fixed upon him, becauſe he is a 'good man, and who, I am ſure, will 'not oppreſs my people.'

The new comptroller-general, at firſt juſtified the king's choice, by his eaſy manners, and amiable modeſty, which his flatterers contraſted with the reſerve and auſterity of his predeceſſor, but the event ſhewed that Colbert's place might be filled, but its duties not performed. Pelletier ſought in tranſient expedients, thoſe reſources which Colbert found in the equitable aſſeſſment of moderate impoſts. His incapacity was ſoon diſcovered, he acknowledged it himſelf, and laid down a burden too heavy for him to ſuſtain. Madame de Maintenon ſeldom after this, took any part in the revolutions of the miniſtry, and frequently ſaid, a miniſter ought not to be made by a cabal, the public approbation ſhould direct the king's choice *.

* Memoirs of madame d'H.....

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.

Madame de Maintenon *refuses the poſt of lady of honour.*

MADAME de Maintenon had already forgot the treachery of madame de Richelieu: but ſhe remembered it ſtill. This dutcheſs had only loved her in her diſtreſs, and in mediocrity; envious of her favour with the king, enraged that ſhe had had it in her power to pardon her for a malicious attempt to ruin her: inſtead of repairing her late treachery by reſuming her former kindneſs, ſhe joined the diſcontented marchioneſs de Monteſpan, and uſed her utmoſt endeavours to revenge the injury madame de Maintenon did her, in deſpiſing that which ſhe had received from her, 'go on, madam, 'go on, ſaid madame de Maintenon to 'her, load me with injury upon injury, 'you ſhall never make me forget the fa-'vours you have formerly confered upon 'me.' Madame de Richelieu was more irritated by this offenſive gratitude, which ſhewed even to herſelf the baſeneſs of her own conduct, ſhe would have broke thoſe ties which bound madame de Maintenon to her, and not being able to make 1684.

her

her ungrateful, she endeavoured to force her to appear so. Madame de Maintenon, tho' exposed every day to the effects of her hatred, still continued to be her friend, and while the dutchess de Richelieu was prejudicing her in the opinion of the dauphiness, madame de Maintenon made use of all her influence to keep her well with the king.

Such extreme patience and generosity, might well surprise the dutchess de Richelieu, for madame de Maintenon could have returned her upbraidings with others equally just. Why did she not say? 'when I was in distress you honoured 'me with your friendship, you admitted 'me to your table, and ten years af-'terwards I procured you the post of lady 'of honour to the queen.' But for noble minds, the first obligations are debts which can never be wholly repaid, even by greater obligations: and the benefactor is a master who never looses his superiority, he may be hated, envied and despised, but he will be always treated with respect.

Madame de Maintenon struggled against the impulses of her just resentment, to preserve to her enemy some remains of consideration, and to give her a taste for good actions by procuring her to be chose superiour

riour of the *charitable ſociety* which had been juſt formed at Verſailles. This ſociety was ſolely her work, ſhe had already eſtabliſhed one of the ſame kind at Bagnieres. Naturally tender and compaſſionate, proſperity which ſteels the hearts of others, ſoftened hers ſtill more, power increaſed her humility, and the gaiety of a court but ſtrengthened her piety. She was never ſatisfied with doing good, and thought but little done while any remained to do. She, therefore, aſſociated herſelf with ſome ladies, who by prevailing upon others to join them, their benevolence, might be more extenſive, and thus her zeal procured relief to a multitude of miſerable wretches, for which her own eſtate was not ſufficient. Theſe ladies met from time to time, to give an account of all the unfortunate perſons that had been recommended to them, and to concert meaſures for their relief. This gave riſe to the *charitable ſociety*; every meeting began with a pathetick exhortation, and ended with a collection which was diſtributed among the poor, and particularly among young girls, whoſe diſtreſſes expoſed them to the danger of ſeduction. The ladies of the court at firſt conſtantly attended theſe aſſemblies, which met every week, they were deſirous of being taken notice of by the king, and each ſtrove to exceed the other in their contribution,

butions, madame de Maintenon diſcovered the motive of this emulation, and took advantage of the high favour ſhe was in to maintain them in it, ſhe forced from vanity what ſhe could not obtain from virtue; but by degrees this ardour decreaſed, and this inſtitution would have fallen, if ſhe had not ſupported it by a very uncommon abuſe of her intereſt, ſhe made diſtinctions at court, the rewards of chriſtian charity.

May 27. The dutcheſs de Richelieu was ſeized with a malignant fever, which carried her off in a few days. Death found her occupied with good works, and almoſt free from her reſentment againſt the woman who had given her a taſte for them. The poor and her huſband mourned her loſs. The duke de Richelieu had when very young, conceived a violent paſſion for her, and in a maturer age, did not repent a marriage which had been ſo ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by madame d'Aiguillon, and ſo openly favoured by the prince of Condé. Some years afterwards the marquis de Richelieu, made a more diſproportionate choice, he married mademoiſelle de Beauvais, a young girl who was neither beautiful nor well born, but who was as much diſtinguiſhed for her amiable qualities, as the dutcheſs for her refined artifice. 'My 'nephews, (ſaid madame Aiguillon in the 'bit-

'bitterneſs of her grief,) my nephews have 'always gone from bad to worſe, the 'eldeſt married the widow of a man 'whom no one knew, the ſecond the 'daughter of a menial ſervant of the 'queen's. I hope the third will take a 'wife out of the family of the hangman, 'certainly my uncle was not very wiſe to 'damn himſelf for this.'

The king was at the ſiege of Luxembourg, when he heard of the dutches's death, madame de Maintenon had attended him to this ſiege, and by her extreme ſolicitude, and anxious fears when he expoſed himſelf to any danger, diſcovered thoſe ſentiments, ſhe laboured ſo much to conceal. She was ſo greatly afflicted for the death of a friend who for two years had ceaſed to be ſo, that the dauphineſs either to comfort or to afflict her more, told her that madame de Richelieu would not have given a tear to her loſs, and informed her of ſome cruel cenſures thrown on her by that lady, which madame de Maintenon had till then been ignorant of. The princeſs ſeemed to take pleaſure in humbling her by repeating all the mean and ſcandalous things ſhe had heard of her, but madame de Maintenon exalting herſelf in proportion as her miſtreſs abaſed her, aſſumed all the dignity of conſcious virtue, ſhe explained all the motives of her conduct,

duct, with ſuch clearneſs, and without ſeeming to condemn either the credulity of her miſtreſs, or the malice of madame de Richelieu, ſhe ſo fully proved her innocence by a long ſeries of inconteſtable facts, that the dauphineſs yielding to the force of truth, confeſſed that ſhe had been deceived, and promiſed her never to be deceived more with reſpect to her. Madame de Maintenon uſed often to ſay. 'There is no policy ſo ſecure as inno-'cence, and this was all mine.' *

Already the ladies of the court formed cabals, and laid ſchemes for the poſt of the dutcheſs de Richelieu. Madame de maintenon whom they thought too inconſiderable to poſſes it, but great enough to give it, was applied to by the different candidates. The king left the dauphineſs at liberty, to act as ſhe pleaſed in this affair, the dauphineſs intreated him to direct her choice: the king aſſured her he would not lay any conſtraint upon her; the princeſs replied, that ſhe had no will but his. 'Well then, madame, ſaid the 'king, to her, your choice will be ſoon 'made.' The dauphineſs immediately named madame de Maintenon, and the king aſſented with pleaſure. A report was

* Memoirs of mademoiſelle d'Aumale, of madame du Perou.

ſpread

ſpread at court that madame de Maintenon was to be made lady of honour. No one either believed, or would venture to contradict it, however ſome ſpoke and acted as if this poſt was ſtill to be given away, and others as if it was already given.

The king charmed that he now had it in his power to place at the head of his court, the woman who reigned in his heart, flew to the apartment of madame de Maintenon that he might be the firſt witneſs of the joy this news would give her: ſo little did he ſtill know of her true character. She received it with the moſt perfect indifference, yet with the deepeſt reſpect, and appeared more worthy of the firſt place than ſolicitous to poſſeſs it. She repreſented to the king, that ſo elevated a ſtation would expoſe her to envy, which it was better to diſarm by moderation than to increaſe by ambition; that ſhe could not forget what ſhe had been, and how greatly ſhe was now raiſed; and that gratitude and duty obliged her to remind him of the laws of decorum, ſince he condeſcended to forget them in her favour. 'With regard 'to the honour, added ſhe, which this 'place would confer upon me, do I not 'enjoy it all in the offer your majeſty 'is pleaſed to make me of it?'*

* Memoirs of mademoiſelle d'Aumale.

The king inſiſted upon her accepting it; madame de Maintenon perſevered in her refuſal: Lewis had not then entertained thoſe great deſigns in her favour, which afterwards he was himſelf aſtoniſhed at, for inſtead of offering her the place of lady of honour, he would have intreated her to reſign that of dame d'Autour: nor could madame de Maintenon either foreſee or expect that amazing elevation, for which ſhe is ſaid to have laid ſuch deep ſchemes, otherwiſe ſhe would have permitted the king to raiſe her inſenſibly. Such as are too malignant to give to virtue the praiſe of any action which may be attributed to vice, will ſay that ſhe exalted herſelf more by refuſing this place than by accepting it. It is certain that in any other but madame de Maintenon ſuch ſeeming humility might be founded in pride, in her it could only proceed from a principle of modeſty, and a conſcious ſenſe of her inferiority. A dutcheſs by declaring the place of a lady of honour above her rank, would have appeared to deſpiſe it, but when the widow of Scaron ſaid it, ſhe ſaid a truth, and was eaſily believed; in a word Tacitus who judges ſo ſeverely yet often ſo juſtly of mankind would not have condemned this refuſal.

The king acquainted the dauphineſs with it, who either depending upon the firmneſs

firmneſs of madame de Maintenon, or deſirous of repairing the injuries ſhe had done her, went to her apartment, and laying aſide all her haughtineſs condeſcended to intreat her to accept the place. She endeavoured to deſtroy the too humble opinion ſhe ſeemed to conceive of herſelf by expreſſions of the higheſt eſteem and friendſhip, and feigned to look upon her refuſal as proceeding from ſome remains of diſcontent. Madame de Maintenon continued inflexible, and the princeſs complained of her obſtinacy to the king with great ſurpriſe, and probably with a ſecret joy.

Lewis defered filling the vacant poſt, with a hope that the habit of officiating as lady of honour would at length determine madame de Maintenon to accept of it; but ſhe, either apprehenſive of entering into a kind of engagement, or of acquitting herſelf too well in her office, or perhaps diſtruſting her own reſolution, inſiſted upon madame de Rochefort's performing the functions of lady of honour, till the king and the dauphineſs appointed one. That lady reſigned them all to her, as ſuppoſing ſhe would ſoon have a claim to them.

The king again intreated her to accept the place; madame de Maintenon again

abſolutely refuſed it. 'Since you will 'not enjoy my benefits, ſaid the king to 'her, you ſhall at leaſt, madam, enjoy 'the honour of your refuſal.' Madame de Maintenon begged him to be ſilent, but the king related it that very afternoon to the whole court.

The counteſs de Mioſſens and the dutcheſs d'Arpajon with whom madame de Maintenon had been intimately connected before her appearance at court, were candidates for the poſt of lady of honour, and ſeverally urged their pretenſions.

The manners of both were irreproachable, both were remarkable for great ſweetneſs of diſpoſition and regularity of behaviour, ſuch was the known virtue of the former, that tho' a heretic, ſhe was offered the poſt of lady of honour, but madame de Maintenon could not prevail upon her to go to maſs for the chief dignity of the court. A year afterwards madame de Mioſſens turned roman catholic without a bribe. The king's choice at length fell upon madame d'Arpajon. *

* Catharine Henrietta d'Harcourt, married April 24 1659, to Lewis duke d'Arpajon, chief of the king's orders, and Lieutenant-general of the province of Languedoc. This nobleman was father to the counteſs de Noailles.

This

This lady was ſiſter to the marquis de Beuvron * with whom madame de Maintenon had ſpent ſo many agreeable hours in her youth, and whoſe family ſhe patroniſed even to the third generation.

Tho' ſhe had refuſed the place of lady of honour, yet ſhe willingly accepted that of ſuperior of the charitable ſociety, vacant alſo by the death of the dutcheſs de Richelieu; ſhe had vowed to devote to the poor all the power her favour with the king put into her hands; ſhe took delight in adminiſtring to their neceſſities herſelf, and being always apprehenſive that the good ſhe intended to do might be miſapplied, ſhe diſtributed the alms with her own hand. She felt with the moſt tender ſenſibility the diſtreſſes of theſe objects of her benevolence, and in the center of all the conveniences and pleaſures of life; her imagination painted in the ſtrongeſt colours their poverty and ſufferings, and impreſſed the mournful image on her heart. She inſpired the king with compaſſion like her own, by expoſtulations and complaints, which all her prudence could not make her reſtrain. 'Ah! why would 'ſhe often ſay, why ſo prodigal of money

* He died April 23, 1705, aged ſeventy eight, he was father to Henry duke d'Harcourt, peer and marſhal of France, born April 2. 1654. and died October 19. 1718.

'for ſhews and entertainments for the 'luxurious courtiers, while thouſands of 'your poor people are dying of hunger.'

The report of her extenſive charity ſpread over the provinces: from every part they had recourſe to her as the common patroneſs of all the unfortunate. The poor and the rich found acceſs to her equally eaſy; the haughty cardinal, and the deſpiſed capuchin were ſeen to enter her cloſet together, the prince, and the beggar covered with rags.

One day there appeared in her antichamber a man, who with ſome difficulty making his way through the croud, accoſted her with a reſpectful freedom, and thus ſpoke to her. 'It is now, madam, 'forty years ſince I have ſeen you: yet 'it is poſſible you have not entirely for-'got me. You may remember that at 'your return from Martinico, you uſed 'to come every thurſday to the gate of 'the jeſuits college at Rochelle, where 'according to the cuſtom of the greater 'part of our ſocieties, the young fathers 'diſtribute food to the poor. I was in 'my turn employed in this office, I di-'ſtinguiſhed you among the croud of 'beggars: I am not afraid, madam, to re-'cal an incident to your remembrance, 'which you may acknowledge without a 'bluſh. I was ſtruck with the nobleneſs

'of

'of your countenance, you did not appear to me to be formed for ſuch an 'abject ſtate; I took notice of your confuſion, when you preſented yourſelf to 'have part of the alms, and I felt the 'tendereſt pity for you.' You then, monſieur, replied madame de Maintenon, 'are that charitable religious, who, to 'ſpare me the ſhame and mortification 'of being confounded with thoſe unhappy 'wretches, cauſed the victuals to be ſent 'home to me, and expreſſed the kindeſt 'concern at your inability to give my 'diſtreſſes a larger relief; you twice ſaved 'my life, firſt by the food you gave me, and 'by your generous pity for what I ſuffered 'at being obliged to aſk publickly for an 'alms.' She then deſired to know how ſhe could ſerve him, and made him follow her into her cloſet, to ſpare him in her turn the humiliation of diſcloſing his neceſſities before the croud. There the old man told her, that he had quitted the jeſuits ſeveral years ago, that he was then maſter of a ſchool in a ſmall village, that all his ambition terminated in getting a curacy, and having heard of her elevation, and her benovelence from public fame, he had hoped to obtain what he wiſhed, through her intereſt, and perhaps from her gratitude. Madame de Maintenon thanked him for a confidence ſo obliging for her, and told him that ſhe never con-

cerned herſelf in the nomination to benefices, that ſhe knew not whether he was qualified for a curacy, but that ſhe was very ſure he was charitable: that ſhe intreated him therefore to accept for the preſent of a purſe of a hundred piſtoles, which ſhe gave him with a promiſe to fill it every year with the ſame moderate ſum. 'I would do more for you, added ſhe, but 'I enjoy not yet all the profits of my place, 'on account of the aſſiſtances I owe my 'relations: for you are not the only per-'ſon who compaſſionated my diſtreſſes in 'my youth.'

The king that moment entering her cloſet, ſhe ſaid to him: 'See here, Sire, a 'man who acted the part of a father to 'me in my youth, and be no longer ſur-'priſed that I ſometimes importune you 'for unhappy orphans.' She then related to him the whole ſtory, either that ſhe was tranſported by her gratitude, or that ſhe was ſolicitous to prevent the malignant repetitions of her enemies, for pride is ever higheſt, when it moſt ſeems to ſeek abaſement.

The mingled croud of courtiers and ſuppliants who were in the antichamber, ſeemed extremely ſurpriſed, that in the looks and behaviour of madame de Maintenon, they neither ſaw ſhame, uneaſineſs

or

or oſtentation, and madame de Maintenon, was doubtleſs no leſs ſurpriſed at the meanneſs of their aſtoniſhment, for to great ſouls nothing is difficult.

Recollecting one day ſome paſſages of her former life, ſhe remembered that being to receive ſeveral perſons of quality at her houſe, ſhe had borrowed ſome furniture of a waſher-woman, who had refuſed to take any money for the loan of it. Aſhamed at having ſo long neglected to return an obligation, ſhe ordered her ſervants to ſeek for this woman. After many enquiries they at length found her lodging in a garret, loaded with years and infirmities. Madame de Maintenon went to ſee her, recalled to her remembrance the loan of the furniture, ſettled a ſmall penſion on her for the remainder of her life, and paid her the firſt quarter immediately: every day ſhe repaid by private benefits, the obligations ſhe had received in her youth, and her grateful benevolence diſcovered in the moſt diſtant provinces, benefactors who were aſtoniſhed to find themſelves not forgot.

End of the SIXTH BOOK.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

The marquis de Richelieu is pardoned by the king.

THE king's eſteem for madame de Maintenon increaſed every day, and his tenderneſs grew with his eſteem: to pleaſe her he adopted her ſentiments, and regulated all his inclinations by hers; glory had been his idol, he now acknowledged the vanity of it, and loved nothing but the public good. Scarce a day of his reign, had paſſed without being diſtinguiſhed by a victory, or graced by ſome new magnificence, but now every day produced ſome uſeful reflexion, ſome act of benevolence, ſome meaſures for the peace of Europe, and ſome grants for the relief of his ſubjects. He had loved hunting

ing paſſionately, but now acknowledged that the hours he ſpent in this exerciſe, were due to the cares of his empire; and he became more avaritious of his time. It was his taſte for theatrical entertainments that produced thoſe maſter-pieces of the french ſcene, for which all nations have envied us, but now he ſeldom went to the play-houſe, and appeared there but once during the year of mourning for the queen: the arts loſt by this change, but the nation was the better for it. Thoſe hours which he uſed to trifle away with the indolent courtiers, were now employed in his cloſet with his miniſters, and the more he applied himſelf to the affairs of ſtate, the ſtronger was his conviction that it was neither poſſible nor fit that a king ſhould have leiſure.

While his whole attention was thus engaged in the painful duties of his ſtation, and in repairing the horrible devaſtations of war, madame de Maintenon by her advice and her example, forced him to give part of his cares to the relief of the poor. Lewis revered her benevolence, and one evening the converſation happening to turn upon the incapacity of men, and the talents of women for public employments, he ſaid to madame de Maintenon, 'And 'you, madame, are well qualified for the 'poſt of great almoner of France. *

* Memoirs of the abbé Pirot.

Her power with the king, was no leſs uſeful to perſons in diſgrace than to the poor, ſhe even ſhielded the marquis de Richelieu under ſentence for a rape, from the rigor of the offended laws. No one would venture to ſolicit for his pardon, nor had Lewis ever granted one for this crime, the only one, which, in his opinion, clemency could not forgive. He had indeed, in ſome degree, committed it himſelf, but what in a ſubject is an atrocious crime, in a king is but a venial ſin: madame de Maintenon, who was a friend to all that bore the name of Richelieu, repreſented to him that he could not with juſtice puniſh a crime, of which he had given ſo public an example, and forced, from his own indulgence to himſelf, the pardon of a man who had dared to imitate him. But to prevent ſuch acts of violence from being hereafter committed, through a hope of eſcaping with impunity, it was expreſſed in the *letters* that the marquis de Richelieu was pardoned, in conſideration of the great ſervices of cardinal Richelieu *; the laws were ſtill ſilenced by the name only of a man who, when living, had violated them all.

* Memoirs of the marquis de Dungeau.

CHAP-

CHAPTER II.

The Princes of Conti.

THE prince of Conti was baniſhed from the court, and had deſerved to be ſo. Madame de Maintenon would have thought it an offence to virtue, to intereſt herſelf in the favour of a youth who was puniſhed for the licentiouſneſs of his conduct; but ſhe permitted the princeſs of Conti to ſay all that tender grief could ſuggeſt, perſuaded that the king would be more eaſily moved by his daughter, and that the prince would be grateful for the good offices of his wife. By acting in this manner, ſhe ſpared herſelf the diſagreeable taſk of importuning the king, and purſued the plan ſhe had formed for eſtabliſhing union in the royal family. 1685.

Madame de Conti came to preſent two letters from the prince her huſband to the king. 'I can refuſe nothing from 'your hand, ſaid Lewis to her, but I 'ſhall make no other uſe of theſe letters 'than to throw them into the fire.' Madame de Maintenon intreated him to read them; he took them out of his daughter's hand,

hand, and burnt them immediately. However the ſame day he gave orders that the prince of Conti ſhould be paid what ſums he demanded of his own revenues, but that he ſhould not receive any part of what belonged to the princeſs.

The prince, leſs obliged by this favour than piqued at the contempt ſhewn to his letters, reſolved to quit France: he had a numerous court during his exile, compoſed of all the malecontents in the kingdom; of the ſons of the duke de Créqui, who had nothing to hope for; of the prince of Turenne, who was accuſed of having diſobliged the dauphin and dauphineſs; of prince Eugene who had been refuſed a regiment; and many other young noblemen, whom the inſolence of Louvois, or the auſterity of the court had diſguſted. The prince of Conti and the prince de la Roche-ſur-yon his brother, had formerly deſired the king's permiſſion to make a campaign in Poland, which the king refuſed to grant, ſaying, 'have 'patience, I will ſhew you enough of 'war.'

The two princes made a propoſal to their friends to ſet out privately for Germany, and attempt ſome noble exploits. Prince Eugene, who only ſighed for fame and honour, and from whom the peace lately

lately made, and his disgrace with the king, took away all hope of either, received this proposal with transport, and prevailed upon these rash and imprudent youths to take a resolution he was fixed in himself.

This design was executed with so much caution, that the princes were out of France before it was suspected. The king shewed great uneasiness; it was reported they had resolved to enter into the service of the emperor, and their desertion was attributed to the ill usage they had received from Louvois. The court dispatched couriers after them immediately with orders to return, and Louvois wrote to the prince de Turenne, assuring him, that if he and his companions would come back, they should all be pardoned except prince Eugene, who would never be permitted to come again into France. When this part of the letter was read, prince Eugene cried out: 'I will enter France one 'day in spite of monsieur Louvois *.'

The princes were received in all the places they passed through with honours that awakened their resentment for the contempt they had been treated with at the court of France. At Vienna they were loaded with civilities by the emperor, whose pride was greatly soothed to see

* Foulque's memoirs of prince Eugene.

Bourbons

Bourbons among his courtiers. Every day the moſt ſuperb entertainments were made for them, as if to inſult the melancholy balls at Verſailles: in a word, they amuſed themſelves as well as Frenchmen could be amuſed, among a people who knew not how to be gay.

From feaſts, ſhews, and magnificence, they flew to the tumult of war, either becauſe they would force their king to repent the loſs of ſo much valour, or hoped to obtain a pardon for their flight, by the great actions they would perform. Prince Eugene had a conſiderable command in the army, but all the others ſerved in it as volunteers. In Hungary they ſaw both a ſiege and a battle, and did wonders in each, which the king heard with expreſſions of joy that confirmed their hopes of being pardoned.

Mean time they correſponded regularly with their friends in Paris, their letters were wrote with great freedom, nor were the anſwers they received leſs reſerved. The marquis de Louvois being informed of this correſpondence, cauſed ſome of his ſpies to follow a page named Merfit, who had been ſent by the princes from Hungary, and diſpatched a courier to Straſbourg, with orders to the commandant to arreſt the page upon the bridge, juſt

as

as he was entering Germany. Merfit was ſeized and ſtript, ſeveral packets were found upon him, which the commandant ſent to the miniſter, who inſtantly delivered them to the king.

The firſt packet that was opened contained a letter from the princeſs of Conti, one from the ſon of Louvois, and another from his ſon-in-law. The miniſter, in great grief and confuſion at the imprudence he had been guilty of, reſolved at leaſt to take advantage of it, to ſecure his own favour with the king; he concealed his diſorder, ambition ſilenced the voice of nature, and he ſaid to the king, 'if my ſons have failed in their duty and 'reſpect to your majeſty, I conjure you, 'Sire, to puniſh them as they deſerve.'

The princeſs of Conti told her huſband in her letter, that ſhe had taken a maid of honour, immediately after he had made his eſcape, leſt madame de Maintenon ſhould ſet one over her, and added, *I ſometimes take the air with the king and madame de* Maintenon, *judge how well I am diverted.*

The marquis de Courtenvaux in his letter, expreſſed his concern that his father had not ſucceeded in his endeavours to engage the king in a war. He afterwards

wards ridiculed the king's great capacity for ſieges, and his averſion to battles. Whatever might be the emotions felt by Louvois, when his ſon's letter was read, he ſhewed more indignation than grief at it. Madame de Maintenon was pierced to the heart by every malicious ſtroke that was leveled at the king; but Lewis, as much ſuperior to injuries as above all praiſe, read theſe ſatires with the ſame indifference, that he would have liſtened to his panegyrick.

The diſpatches from the duke de la Rocheguyon and the marquis de Liancourt, were full of the moſt atrocious injuries. Liancourt, in his letters to the prince of Conti, called Lewis a king of tradeſmen; he ſaid that he was grown old before his time, that he was more infatuated than ever with his fondneſs for his village friend, with whom he ſhut himſelf up great part of every day under pretence of writing his hiſtory, but tha the believed the king * * * * * * * * * * * *. He gave a burleſque deſcription of the entertainment at the palace of Sçeaux, ridiculed the perſon who gave it, and all that were preſent at it, but particularly the king and madame de Maintenon, whom he never mentioned but with contempt: he concluded with an account of the publick audience that was given to the Muſcovite ambaſ-

ambaſſadors, and with inſolent jeſts upon the king, who, ſaid he, *is a theatrical king, when he is to appear in public, a king of ſcaling-ladders when he is to fight.*

The duke de la Rocheguyon wrote underneath, that his brother had left him nothing to add, but it is certain that when Liancourt read his letter to him, he ſaid, 'what have you done brother? if this 'letter ſhould be intercepted, you will 'be thought to deſerve death.'

The marquis d'Alincourt, filled his letter with inſulting ironies in proſe and verſe. That of the cardinal de Bourbon, was a bitter ſatire upon the king's conduct, perſon, and government, and every where abounded with thoſe harſh truths which leave indelible traces upon the memory.

Madame de Maintenon who would have thrown thoſe letters into the fire, to ſpare the king the mortification of reading ſo many injurious cenſures, reproached the marquis de Louvois with her eyes, for performing ſo cruel a ſervice. He who had diſcloſed the offence, ſeemed to her as criminal as thoſe who had committed it. She could not comprehend why this miniſter, who took ſo many bold freedoms, did not venture to open theſe letters, and when he ſaw what they contained,

tained, give the writers a ſevere reprimand, threaten to ſhew their letters to the king, but have conſigned them to the flames, and their fault to oblivion.

As inſenſible as Lewis appeared to theſe inſults, it is certain that there was more magnanimity than indifference in his moderation. Intoxicated with the incenſe of flattery, full of his own greatneſs, how could he, for the firſt time, learn that he had faults without being exceſſively mortified. He now ſaw that he had been praiſed without ſincerity, that his courtiers had been ſagacious enough to diſcover what he wiſhed to conceal from them, and had judged with malignity of what they could not diſcover, that the woman for whom he had the higheſt eſteem, was to them an object of contempt, and that he was in reality great only in his own eyes.

He ſent for the dukes de la Rochefoucault and Villeroi, and ſhewing them their ſons letters, aſked them if they knew the ſeals. They both replied, with great emotion, that they were their children's: read the letters, ſaid the king; they opened them trembling, at the firſt words they fell from their hands. The duke de Villeroi threw himſelf at the king's feet, and bathed them with his tears. The duke

duke de Rochefoucault, in the bitterneſs of deſpair, exclaimed: 'Our children 'have deſerved to loſe their heads, I 'dare not implore a pardon for them.' Then a moment after embracing the king's knees, he cried, 'But oh! Sire, 'they are young, and you are merciful.' The king raiſing them, ſaid, 'I will 'conſider of it, but let them not appear be-'fore me.'

The hope theſe words gave them was deſtroyed by the reflections they made on the greatneſs of their ſon's crimes: they went from the king's preſence in agonizing terrors, imploring with their eyes, the ſafety of their children from madame de Maintenon, who only anſwered them with tears ſhed for the beſt of kings, ſo cruelly inſulted, and for the grief of the tender and unhappy fathers who relied on her power with him.

A prince leſs capable of commanding his paſſions would have conſigned the criminals to inſtant puniſhment, and the whole court expected that the audacious youths would have been arreſted, and delivered over to juſtice. Our manners were at that time ſoftened and refined, yet a leſs puniſhment than death was ſcarcely hoped for. In a monarchy the ſovereign and the man can never be ſeparated even

in

in thought: the prince may have faults, and even vices, yet to his ſubjects he is always the moſt reſpectable of mortals: writings which tend to diminiſh that reſpect, are acts of rebellion againſt the nation, the majeſty of which reſides in the legiſlator. Lewis, therefore, could not with juſtice have been called a tyrant, if he had puniſhed the calumniators of his ſacred perſon with death, but his ſoul was too great to admit of ſo mean a paſſion as revenge, his affections too mild, not to make it eaſy to him to pardon an offence committed only againſt himſelf: his clemency was a reproach to all ſubjects in power and in place, who are at once witneſſes and judges in their own cauſe, and employ the higheſt acts of ſovereignty to revenge their particular injuries.

The guilty youths were baniſhed from the court, moſt of them were confined to a reſidence upon their own eſtates. The marquis de Liancourt was ſent into the iſle of Oleron, cardinal Bouillon was baniſhed with ignominy, and the princeſs of Conti was depreſt with a ſingle glance. She went to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, bathed in tears, who only ſaid to her, 'weep, weep, madam, for it is a 'great misfortune not to have a good 'heart.

The

The princeſs of Conti was ſeized ſome time afterwards with a ſevere indiſpoſition, madame de Maintenon attended her during the whole courſe of her diſtemper with the greateſt tenderneſs and care. The princeſs having earneſtly deſired to ſee the king, told him ſhe ſhould die contented if he would pardon her, and ſuffer her to hope that he had ſtill ſome tenderneſs for her. The king ſhewed the moſt affectionate concern for her illneſs, and endeavoured to comfort her with the ſofteſt aſſurances of his forgiveneſs and his love.

The duke de la Rochefoucault not daring to repreſent to the king, that the air of Oleron was very prejudicial to the health of the marquis de Liancourt his ſon, ſome other perſons hinted it to Lewis, who immediately permitted him to retire to Verteuil, and afterwards to ſerve him at the head of his regiment, that he might have an opportunity of meriting his pardon.

The king at length went to ſpend a few days at a country houſe belonging to the duke de la Rochefoucault, and telling him that being reſolved to pay his hoſt, he thought he could not better acknowledge his civilities than by freely pardoning his ſon: 'bring him hither, ſaid the 'king,

'king, that I may tell him myself he is 'forgiven.'

The duke shed tears of joy and gratitude, and assured the king that his son should, by his future services, efface the remembrance of his fault. The marquis de Liancourt appeared, threw himself at the king's feet, renewed the protestations which his father had made in his name, and from that time lived at court with the same ease and security as if he had not committed an offence, the hardest to forget, the most difficult to pardon. Lewis was always uniformly great, those who had injured him without cause, and whom he had punished without malice, he saw again without perplexity; conscious of his own worth, supported by his own esteem, he knew that his reputation neither depended upon the satires of Liancourt, nor the panegyrics of Boileau.

The princes of Conti and la Roche-sur-yon returned from Hungary, and appeared again at court, but were every where received with great coldness: they had been the greatest offenders, by the bad example they had given both before and after their journey. The king told madame de Maintenon, that he would take from the prince of Conti the privilege

velege of the grand entries, and that the princeſs ſhould ſignify his intentions to him: 'Sire, replied madame de Maintenon, leave to the princeſs of Conti 'the pleaſing employment of bearing 'good news to her huſband, let me be 'the denouncer of ill.' She acquitted herſelf of this commiſſion with great delicacy, her meſſage was afflicting, but ſhe comforted him with promiſes that all his paſt conduct ſhould be ſoon forgot *.

The prince of Conti died of the ſmall-pox at Fontainebleau, and having no children, his titles and eſtates fell to his brother monſieur de la Roche-ſur-yon, who married the daughter of the prince of Condé, obtained his pardon, and deſerved to obtain it, as will be ſeen in the following part of this hiſtory.

* Manuſcripts of the biſhop of Agen, of the marquis de Dangeau, of madame de Glapion.

CHAPTER III.

The Devotee's.

THE king, whoſe reformation was begun and compleated by madame de Maintenon, perſiſted in a regularity of conduct, which ſoon produced a change in the manners of the court. Devotion began to be faſhionable; thoſe ladies who had been moſt remarkable for the licentiouſneſs of their behaviour, affected the greateſt zeal, the churches and confeſſionaries were now more frequented than balls and opera's had been before. The marchioneſs de Monteſpan, ſtill ſolicitous to pleaſe, gave the example, and blended piety with grandeur. Shews and entertainments were almoſt neglected, the talents of wit and humour were leſs eſteemed, every thing, even pleaſure itſelf, wore a face of ſolemn gravity.

Lewis was charmed with theſe ſeeming converſions, he took all the merit of them to himſelf; to him the ladies ſacrificed their prevailing paſſions, their lovers were diſcarded, or their amours conducted with the greateſt ſecrecy; they no longer heightened their complexions with paint,

paint; the modes of dreſs and equipage were regulated with the niceſt regard to modeſty and prudence, and from ſcruples about a rupture with Rome, they now expreſſed a ſenſible grief for it.

Madame de Maintenon was not deceived, ſhe well knew how to diſtinguiſh between thoſe who ſincerely returned to God, and thoſe who conformed to the prevailing taſte, and, by profeſſing piety, acquired one vice more. However, it is poſſible that madame de Maintenon, by advancing the glory of God, extended too far the power of the clergy. The devotees were conſulted on every occaſion, a curate of Verſailles became now a man of prodigious importance, under colour of reforming manners, the church concerned itſelf in the affairs of the ſtate; the confeſſors were maſters of the ſecrets in every family, and took advantage of this knowledge, to give weight to their advice.

The public loudly exclaimed againſt this abuſe, and ſaid the reign of the prieſthood was now begun, that all were ſolicitous for the grandeur of the king, but that the good of the people was forgot; every new incident awakened theſe clamours, the zealots were accuſed of being the cauſe that a brave and experi-

enced general was ſuffered to remain idle, becauſe he did not go to maſs, and that a prince of the blood was in diſgrace becauſe he was a libertine.

The king was deſirous of ſeeing the ſame harmony and concord in his court, as now reigned in his family, he reconciled thoſe noblemen whom former reſentments, or protracted law-ſuits had kept at variance. Was there an infidel, who, on his death bed, refuſed to ſee a prieſt and receive the ſacrament, Lewis wrote an emphatical Letter, with his own hand, to the dying man, and the prieſt is the bearer of it *; did any married couple live upon ill terms, Lewis ſent the curate of Verſailles to them with an order to love each other †.

From reſtraint proceed crimes unpractiſed before; ſome young courtiers formed a ſociety, into which the princes were initiated. It was ſaid, that one of the firſt rules laid down by them was, that every member ſhould upon his admittance, take an oath to renounce women entirely. It is certain that they committed the moſt ſcandalous exceſſes, and that women were always excluded from their parties.

* Dangeau's memoirs.

† Memoirs of the biſhop of Agen.

The

The king was informed of these enormities; he banished one prince, caused another to be severely corrected, and expressed so much indignation against this infamous society, that no one durst venture to solicit a pardon for the guilty youths. Of the duke de G..... he said, 'I will leave him to the court, I 'despise him too much to punish him 'myself.' The names of these licentious young men shall not appear here, through esteem for the virtues of their fathers, and respect to the dignity of their children.

The exiles returned to court, and with them their crime returned also. The curate of Versailles, wearied with repeated complaints of the violences and seductions committed by the grandees, intreated madame de Maintenon to apply to the king for some remedy to these disorders: 'I have often done what you desire, said 'madame de Maintenon, but whenever 'I press his majesty to make an example 'of one of those criminals, he always an-'swers, I must then * .....

Devotion seldom produces a reformation of manners; luxury, with all its train of evils, was now carried to the greatest ex-

* Manuscript of the bishop of Agen.

ceſs. The king had unhappily given the example, and madame de Maintenon often ſaid to him, ‘ Sire, you have given vir-‘ tue a wound which will bleed a long ‘ time.’

At the view of thoſe royal palaces, the out-ſides of which gave an idea of the grandeur of the monarch, and the inſide diſcloſed his riches, and the elegance of his taſte; foreigners were ſeized with aſtoniſhment, and the French with emulation; the nobleman imitated the magnificence of his king, and what twenty years before had been looked upon as an exceſs of profuſion, was now thought a moderate expence. The princes of the blood conſoled themſelves for the loſs of power in the ſtate, by being allowed to preſide over faſhions, and to direct taſte. Subordination was almoſt deſtroyed, ranks began to be confounded; he who was rich claimed an equality with him that was born noble; the poor copied the rich; the clergy ſupplied the extravagance of vanity, with the money that was deſtined for the neceſſities of the indigent; and the financiers already threatened to incroach upon the offices of judicature.

It is certain that France had been inriched by commerce and by arts, but for want

want of ſumptuary laws, the fruits of induſtry ſo zealouſly patronized by Colbert, were devoured by the natives, inſtead of being ſold to foreigners; the ruin of the nation was begun by luxury, and compleated by the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

CHAPTER IV.

Revocation of the edict of Nantes.

I Cannot without grief open the wounds of my country, but perhaps it may not be unuſeful to ſtop a little, and conſider an event, which ſet bounds to the proſperity of France, and changed the whole ſyſtem of Europe.

When Lewis, brought back to virtue by madame de Maintenon, ſuffered his imagination to be heated with the enthuſiaſm of devotion, he began to hold long and frequent conferences with monſieur de Harlai archbiſhop of Paris, monſieur Boſſuet biſhop of Meaux, and father de la Chaiſe his confeſſor.

Theſe conferences turned at firſt upon the duties, and afterwards upon the tenets

of religion. The biſhops and the jeſuit beſtowed ſuch laviſh praiſes on the zeal of Theodoſius and Charlemaign for extirpating hereſy, ſhewed Calviniſm in ſo many different and all odious lights, ſo artfully exaggerated the glory he would acquire by cruſhing a monſter, which ſix of his predeceſſors had not been able to reſtrain; that the king perſuaded himſelf, the true means of expiating his ſins was to make his whole kingdom catholick. He had allowed this notion to act ſo forcibly upon his mind, that he one day told monſieur de Ruvigni a proteſtant nobleman, that, to deſtroy hereſy, he would with joy cut off one of his hands with the other.

This nobleman repreſenting to him, that the edict in favour of the proteſtants, which was given by Henry the fourth, preſerved by Lewis the thirteenth, and ratified by himſelf, was every day violated by decrees of the council; the king replied, 'My grandfather loved you, my 'father feared you; as for me, I neither 'love nor fear you *.' Ruvigni might have anſwered, yet we are men, and born your ſubjects.

* Memoirs and manuſcripts of the biſhop of Agen. *Vos dilexit avus, timuit pater: aſt ego neutrum.*

Louvois

Louvois was jealous of theſe frequent conferences, he diſcovered the ſecret, and trembled leſt his influence ſhould be weakened by it; he uſed his utmoſt endeavours to have a ſhare in what was concerting, but what probability was there, that a miniſter for the affairs of war could be uſefully employed in matters of religion? Yet Louvois hit upon expedients to introduce himſelf; he knew that Lewis loved eaſe and expedition in the execution of any enterpriſe, that the ſlighteſt obſtacles cooled his fervor, and that he was convinced he ſhould meet with innumerable difficulties in his endeavours to convert ſo many thouſands of his ſubjects. Louvois with all the confidence of ſecurity, aſſured him that he was furniſhed with the means of reducing them in a ſhort time, yet the arbitrary exertion of authority was all he knew, and he propoſed that the arguments of faith ſhould be enforced by the terrors of the ſword; his plan was admitted and followed exactly, the provinces were filled with prieſts and dragoons, who eagerly contended which ſhould make the greateſt number of proſelytes.

The French gazettes were now full of converſions, but not the leaſt mention was made of the new miſſionaries by whom they were performed. The curates after having wearied out the huguenots

with torments, at length bid them *taſte and know the goodneſs of the Lord.*

Their deputy-general in vain complained to their miniſters of the vexations of the intendants; the miniſters promiſed them relief, and ſent orders ſtill more rigorous. They found they muſt either abjure or ſuffer. The perſecuted proteſtants preſented to their oppreſſors thoſe ſacred edicts under the protection of which they lived: Alas! this was oppoſing paper to ſteel.

After the army had prepared the minds of the huguenots for the reception of the true religion, it was thought neceſſary to ſtrike the laſt great blow. They brought the king ſo many falſe liſts of purchaſed abjurations, that Lewis believed the edict of Nantes was now uſeleſs, and need not be preſerved for the ſmall number of obſtinate huguenots that remained. This cabal repreſented as proviſional and extorted, an edict, the publick articles of which treated the proteſtants as neceſſary, and the private ones as faithful and beloved ſubjects: the whole kingdom, they ſaid, would now be catholick; the fathers might poſſibly ſtill reſiſt the truth, but their children would be more tractable. Vain promiſes, ill founded hopes, which the event has proved to be falſe. After ſeventy years of oppreſſion

oppreſſion the deſcendents of thoſe who were proſcribed, have appeared again as numerous, and more obſtinate than ever.

This great affair was not even examined by the council, ſo ſtrong was the prejudice of Lewis, ſo great his deluſion. Poſterity may poſſibly wiſh to know what were the reaſons which induced a prince ſo mild, ſo prudent, ſo generous, to make four millions of his ſubjects wretched: let it be told then, that it was zeal, which made him cruel, that he had no cauſe either to hate, to dread or to complain of the hugnenots, and that he knew them only by the ſervices they rendered him: let it be told that there never was a proceſs between two private perſons which was not examined with more care, more equity, and longer protracted, than that which concerned the fifth part of the nation. The council unanimouſly voted for the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and among ſo many miniſters not one man was to be found.

Gourville when he heard this news, foretold all the evils that muſt neceſſarily follow from ſo violent a reſolution: Gourville was laughed at. We had occaſion for the experience of a whole age to convince us, that the duke de la Rochefouncault's valet de chamber was in the right, and we

have even now men inveſted with high employments who will not admit this truth, as if they thought they were anſwerable for their predeceſſors faults.

Chateauneuf drew up the *ſevere* edict yet ſeemed to condemn the articles of it. The king there declares that there are ſcarce any hereticks remaining in his kingdom. Le Tellier ſealed it, and died contented: the parliament one day breathing nothing but patriotiſm, the next full of the ſpirit of fanaticiſm, regiſtred it without any remonſtrance; and Louvois took upon himſelf the care of putting it in execution. 'It is his majeſty's pleaſure, ſays he in a 'letter to the duke de Noailles in Lan-'guedoc, that thoſe who will not em-'brace his religion ſhall be treated with 'the utmoſt rigor.' Such was the method of converſion then, and ſuch the arguments uſed to tender conſciences. The huguenots in vain declared, that they had rather have no religion than one that authoriſed cruelty, that minds were not ſubjected like towns by force; they were ſhewn the king's abſolute order to think as he did.

The janſeniſts became perſecutors to avoid being perſecuted themſelves. The jeſuits fulfilled the hopes that had been conceived from their known zeal for religion; they preached, and they oppreſſed.

Fene-

Fenelon alone refuſed to have ſoldiers for collegues in his miſſions of Poitou.

The archbiſhop of Paris condemned the revocation *, and publickly congratulated the king upon it. The pope expreſſed neither joy nor gratitude, which proved the truth of what the queen of Sweden ſaid to the ſenate of Stockholm, 'I know the pope, ſaid ſhe; he would 'not give a penny for all your ſouls.' †

In Paris the revocation was judged of differently, ſome ſaid that the kingdom would from henceforward be tranquil, as if it had not been ſo for forty years paſt. Others maintained that tranquillity was purchaſed at too dear a rate, that the huguenots had at firſt taken arms to ſecure to the Bourbons the crown which the race of Capet had poſſeſſed, and which the Guiſes had attempted to uſurp; that the wars we had afterwards with them were occaſioned by the catholicks who oppoſed a toleration, or by the reſtleſs ambition of the grandees; and that the deſpair of an oppreſt people, reduced to the neceſſity of holding clandeſtine aſſemblies, was more to be feared than the deliberations of

* Memoirs of the biſhop of Agen.

† Memoirs of Chriſtina queen of Sweden by monſieur Arckholtz, volume the ſecond.

Synods,

Synods, where the king was preſent by his commiſſioners.

The biſhops wrote in defence of the oppreſſion, and attempted to prove, that Jeſus Chriſt had commanded his diſciples to make proſelytes with ſtripes.* In vain the oppreſt huguenots alleged, that by not tolerating their faith, they only made hypocrites who laughed at all religion in ſecret, deiſts who openly combated it with arguments, while many were wholly indifferent and deſpiſed it: the catholicks laughed at their reaſons, and inſulted their miſeries, and, while the Spaniſh biſhops conſigned to the flames thoſe Jews who profaned the ſacraments, the French biſhops ſent calviniſts to the Galleies for refuſing to profane them. Yet theſe perſecutors profeſſed to ſerve a merciful God; the huguenots in tortures exclaimed againſt a God ſo cruel.

The clergy complimented the king upon having without violent methods reunited all his ſubjects to the holy ſee. The ſectaries were not allowed to carry their complaints to the foot of the throne, ſo that Lewis was firmly perſuaded that Bâville, la Trouſſe, and Maſillac were very gentle apoſtles. Mean time the rage

* Manuſcript of the biſhop of Agen.

of

of converſion ſpread deſolation over the provinces, Infants were ſnatched from the boſoms of their mothers; the ſacred writings were burned by the hands of the hangman; men of noble birth were made ſlaves; women were treated with ignominy for ſinging the praiſes of God in French; paſtors were broke upon the wheel for not abandoning their flocks to the devouring wolves; old men were dragged to the altar by brutal ſoldiers, who with blaſphemies ordered them to receive their god; the relapſed were thrown into horrid dungeons; the converts were ſurrounded with ſpies, who counted their ſighs; fathers ſat as judges upon the informations given in againſt their children; the dying were perſecuted in their laſt moments by an odious prieſt, and gave up with their ſouls the rejected hoſt. The carcaſes of obſtinate huguenots, denied burial, were trod under feet, or thrown into the common ſhores: a whole people governed by other laws, than thoſe of their fellow-citizens, wore out by ſlow oppreſſion, regretting the fate of their fathers, who were maſſacred in one night: and to complete the horrors of this inhuman perſecution, virgins violated in the arms of their agonizing mothers, or delivered up to tyrants, who * * * * * * * * * My pen refuſes to deſcribe the ſhocking ſcenes, but every enormity was practiſed that a monk foaming with

with luſt, with zeal, and cruelty could invent.

This picture is not heightened by the ſtrokes of prejudice; the hiſtory of the laſt age has preſerved to us actions which would be incredible from their atrociouſneſs, if the hiſtory of the preſent did not furniſh us with the like *. The intendants are not yet weary of tormenting men, in honour of him who created them.

But now it may be aſked, how was Lewis the fourteenth employed, while his miniſters were reducing his fineſt provinces to deſerts? he was celebrating with the moſt magnificent ſhews and entertainments, the nuptials of mademoiſelle de Nantes his daughter, and the duke of Bourbon; projecting his own; congratulating himſelf upon the great number of converſions, and the facility with which they were made; compleating Verſailles; beginning Marly, and liſtening to Boileau, who ſung,

* See the complaints of the French proteſtants by Claude: the hiſtory of the edict of Nantes, by Benoit, and the manuſcript hiſtory of the ſectaries, after the revocation, by monſieur Court: ſee alſo *Accord parfait*, and les Piéces juſtificatives, at the end of the treatiſe on *public worſhip*, by the deceaſed monſieur de la Chapelle.

L'univers

L'univers ſous ton regne a-t'il des malheureux?

'Can ought be wretched when a Lewis reigns?' E.

The cruelties exerciſed by the prieſts and their aſſociates in converſion, the dragoons, depopulated the kingdom, but did not re-unite it in one religion. The huguenots left France by thouſands, and carried into other countries their wealth, their induſtry, and their hatred to the religion of Frenchmen. What an irreparable loſs to the ſtate was the flight of ſo many ſubjects! What a loſs to a king of France, who could not be forſaken by any ſubject that did not love him, and would not have been faithful if zeal would have permitted him!

All Europe aſtoniſhed at the ſacrifice made by policy to ambition, eagerly received the victims, who found among Turks more humanity than among their fellow-citizens. God preſerve the pious ſultan Mahomet, cried our enemies; while he lives, France will never be without ruined villages.

But for this conſequence, which they could not foreſee, although the deſolation occaſioned by the military miſſionaries predicted it, it might have been ſaid, that the deſign of the edict of revocation, which

which was to unite the whole kingdom in one faith, was an act in which religion and policy were equally concerned: but it is certain, that reaſons of ſtate had no force, till they had found the reaſons of the church unſucceſsful. Then it was that to conſole themſelves for the loſs of ſo many ſubjects, and for the mortification of ſo many recantations, they declared that in reality the ſtate loſt none but rebellious or diſaffected citizens. Then the civil wars were remembered; the Guiſes were not reproached; the Rohans were in favour at court; the unhappy huguenots paid for all.

Louvois baſely ſported with the royal word. The edict for reſtraining the proteſtants from leaving France, promiſed them liberty of conſcience, and only deprived them of the public exerciſe of their religion. The next day orders were given out to take that liberty from them likewiſe: certainly that miniſter deſerves to be puniſhed, who prevails upon the ſovereign to deal falſly with his ſubjects.

If the king had not been impoſed upon, it is probable that he would never have revoked the edict. His letters to the elector of Brandenburg and to the duke de Saint Aignan, ſhew how juſtly he

was

was capable of acting when he consulted only his own conscience. Van Robais told the comptroller of the finances, that the revocation of the edict of Nantes would absolutely ruin the useful manufacture of Abbeville. The king was informed of what he had said. Van Robais was allowed a chapel and a minister, both which were denied to marshal Schomberg, for want of knowing the price of a man. 'I would, said Lewis, have my kingdom 'catholic, but I do not intend that it 'shall be impoverished.'

The French sectaries were peculiarly unhappy. The Jews were permitted to leave Spain, but the protestants were constrained to remain in France, without churches, without public worship; they met in deserts to perform acts of devotion, and these meetings were construed into seditious assemblies.

To violate laws which they could not observe without being guilty before God, and contemptible even in the eyes of the legislature, to sing the Psalms of David, to weep over the ruins of their churches, were crimes against the state. Hence proceeded those declarations which filled the gallies, and depopulated the kingdom; the monarch knew not how to refrain from punishing, nor the heretic to

to yield, the treatment they received, ſometimes more, ſometimes leſs rigorous, ſhewed the uncertainty of thoſe principles upon which the court had acted.

Fame, that phantom, which the wiſe contemn, and which kings ſo ardently adore, ſnatched from the proteſtants their laſt remaining hope. Lewis was reſolved to compleat at any price the project he had begun. Hereſy became more obſtinate by the perſecution of zeal, and authority more tenacious by the oppoſition of enthuſiaſm; and this conteſt between conſcience, which claimed to be free, and deſpotiſm, which exacted a ſlaviſh obedience, produced on one ſide fortitude to ſuffer, and on the other cruelty to oppreſs.

Lewis, tho' deaf to the cries of his people, yet heard the exclamations of Europe; he learned from foreign countries the tranſactions in his own, and his ambaſſadors told him truths which his intendants concealed. Bonrepaux, Barillon, the count d'Avaux, aſſured him in their diſpatches, that all the foreign courts were filled with the complaints of the proteſtants for the cruelties they had ſuffered. He afterwards informed the king that the proteſtant merchants were all preparing to leave the kingdom, together with

with three millions of his ſubjects. Lewis replied, 'then my kingdom will purge it-'ſelf.'

The count ventured to reply, that, by purging itſelf, it would grow conſumptive, and offered to ſend back to France, by gentle methods, a great number of tradeſmen, of whom trades and manufactures had great need. 'If they will not ab-'jure their religion, ſaid Lewis in his 'anſwer, it is better that they ſhould re-'main in foreign countries, than return 'to mine with the liberty of continuing 'in their errors.' Theſe words did not ſhew the father of the people, but a rigid devotee piqued at his being deſpiſed.

The proteſtant princes often interceded with Lewis for theſe unhappy victims, and often found him inexorable. The Engliſh ambaſſador having deſired the liberty of ſome gentlemen condemned to the gallies on account of their religion, Lewis replied, 'What would the king of 'Great Britain ſay, if I ſhould make it my 'requeſt that he would releaſe the pri-'ſoners in Newgate?' 'Sir, anſwered 'the ambaſſador, my maſter would rea-'dily grant it, if you claimed them as your 'brethren.'

Some

Some of the refugees forgot the affection they owed to their country, and the reſpect that was due to their king, and waſted, in writing ſcandalous libels, that time, which if chriſtians, they ſhould have employed in ſanctifying their ſufferings, and if good Frenchmen, in praying for their king. Some of the moſt conſiderable bore arms againſt him, of which number were Schomberg, Ruvigni, the count de Roye, and others, whoſe malevolence more enraged than alarmed the court.

The catholics reproached them with being worſe citizens than Cimon and Ariſtides, who had never attempted to carry fire and ſteel to the walls of their ungrateful country: as if the ſwords of heroes of all religions did not now belong to the prince who paid them beſt.

The refugees were blamed with equal injuſtice for the bitter complaints they made againſt their perſecutors. The wretched may be allowed to ſigh, chriſtianity recommends patience to its profeſſors, but does not require that they ſhould be wholly inſenſible. Some of them, indeed, forgot that they were Frenchmen, but every endeavour had been uſed to make them forget it.

Nothing

Nothing enraged Lewis ſo much, as that republican ſpirit which the perſecuted proteſtants acquired in the free ſtates where they took refuge. They tore away the ſacred veil which covers thoſe primitive rights, that cannot be diſcuſſed without being miſtaken, At the ſight of thoſe treatiſes which ſaped the foundations of monarchical authority, the wiſe exclaimed, 'God preſerve us from an huguenot 'pope!'

The Dutch preſſes, always free, then licentious, poured an inundation of writings into France, in which the authors indiſcreetly vented their reſentment againſt all to whom they attributed their miſeries. Louvois, who alone was guilty, alone eſcaped. The French imputed all the errors of their king to the man in whom he confided, and the woman whom he loved. The ſectaries accuſed father de la Chaiſe of being the cauſe of thoſe cruelties that had been exerciſed upon them, and yet he was the firſt who repreſented to the king the inhuman barbarity of digging up the carcaſes of huguenots, and dragging them through the ſtreets upon hurdles; and madame de Maintenon, ſo unjuſtly ſuſpected of animating the king to this oppreſſion, would have trembled with horror, at the bare mention of ſo many unhappy wretches, hung by their hair

to

to hooks in the chimnies, and cielings of their chambers, ſtuck full of pins, or their fleſh torn off with burning pincers, hunted like wild beaſts in fields and woods, blown up with bellows, and plunged into deep pits till they pronounced theſe words, *I will be re united to the church.*

We are aſſured by ſeveral hiſtorians *, who have ſuffered themſelves to be deceived by the exclamations of blind and unreaſonable prejudice, that it was madame de Maintenon, who, with the jeſuits, concerted the revocation of the edict of Nantes. This deſign however was conceived at a time when ſhe was in high favour indeed, but had no influence in affairs. Lewis might mention to a woman, for whom he had an eſteem, the deliberations of his council, tho' he did not aſk her advice or take her opinion. The revocation was not a ſudden ſally of enthuſiaſtic zeal, but the conſequence of long prejudice. Madame de Maintenon, who knew not what exceſs of cruelty the devotees were capable of, had doubtleſs confirmed the king in his pious deſire to

* Limiers, Larrey, and particularly le Vaſſor, who in his hiſtory of Lewis the thirteenth, calumniates madame de Maintenon, and the family of Noailles, thro' reſentment againſt the cardinal of that name, who had expreſſed great contempt for him.

ſee

ſee his whole kingdom catholics; but ſhe was too prudent to recommend violent meaſures, and too mild and compaſſionate not to diſapprove them. To charge any one with a crime without being able to prove it, is calumny; to impute to her upon uncertain grounds a crime oppoſite to her known diſpoſition, is an abſurdity; every thing that remains of madame de Maintenon juſtifies her. In one of her writings, addreſſed to the king, ſhe freely condemns the penal laws, the forced communions, and ſuch as breathing the ſpirit of the inquiſition, ſuffered the rage of bigotry to extend itſelf over arts and commerce. It is certain, that ſhe ſuſpected thoſe huguenots, who, excluded from all employments, could not be uſeful ſubjects, to be dangerous and diſaffected ones. But ſhe was ſenſible that the profeſſors of true religion have always been perſecuted, but never were perſecutors; that the church has a right to puniſh heretics by anathemas, but not to cut their throats; and that the power of the ſword is intruſted with princes againſt thoſe who violate the laws of the ſtate, not againſt ſuch as erroneouſly explain the laws of God.

If ſhe was ſilent on a ſubject which ſo deeply affected her, it was becauſe ſhe was in a manner obliged to it. The mar-

quis de Ruvigny * had often intreated her to take compaſſion on the miſeries of her former brethren, and madame de Maintenon always replied, that ſhe never preſumed to concern herſelf in ſtate affairs, and exhorted him to embrace the true faith.

Ruvigny, whom honour as well as conſcience obliged to be faithful to the cauſe he defended, could not be tempted to ſacrifice it to his own private views; he thought he ſaw in madame de Maintenon a greater diſpoſition to hurt the huguenots, than to ſerve them, and therefore, to leſſen the weight of her advice, he was raſh enough to tell her before the king, that ſhe was born a Calviniſt, that ſhe had continued ſo till her ſettlement at court, and that probably ſhe was ſtill a Calviniſt in her heart.

It was not difficult for madame de Maintenon to clear herſelf from ſuch an imputation; but it will be eaſily believed that ſhe was offended at it, and that it might contribute to ſuſpend the effects of her natural gentleneſs and compaſſion, and ſet bounds to the good offices ſhe

* After having ſerved Lewis the fourteenth in ſeveral difficult negotiations in England, he entered into the ſervice of William the third, who created him lord Galway.

might

might have afterwards rendered the proteſtants, by moderating the extreme rigor which was exerciſed in the firſt rage of converſion.

Probably ſhe was ignorant of thoſe exceſſes of cruelty, for it was not at Verſailles, amidſt eaſe and luxury, near a throne every avenue of which was guarded by lying prieſts, and ſurrounded by paraſites, who took care not to let diſagreeable truths approach it, that ſhe could hear the groans of Languedoc, Dauphiné, and Poitou, laid waſte by the rage of bigotry; however her compaſſion was awakened by the recital of ſome new cruelties exerciſed at Paris, where they had not yet ventured to prove opinions by ſteel, for fear of enraging a people, who, tho' ſuperſtitious, were not diveſted of all remains of humanity.

Madame de Maintenon told the king that there was great reaſon to apprehend that the proteſtants, by ſuch violent meaſures as were uſed to convert them, would be inſpired with an everlaſting antipathy to the true religion; ſhe repreſented to him, that only great crimes ſhould excite his indignation, vice his zeal, and error his compaſſion. She ſpoke with ſuch force and earneſtneſs, that the king could not help ſaying to her: 'Your diſcourſe, madam,

'gives me great uneaſineſs, does it not 'proceed from ſome remaining attach-'ment to the religion you formerly pro-'feſſed *?' Bayle made the ſame re-flexions upon a like diſcourſe of queen Chriſtina's †. Theſe two ladies, doubt-leſs replied, 'To be good catholics is it 'neceſſary to be cruel?'

It was confidently reported that the king taking the air one day in his coach with madame de Maintenon, mademoiſelle d'-Armagnac and monſieur Fagon, the con-verſation turned upon the cruelties ſo uſeleſly exerciſed upon the huguenots; that Fagon related ſome particular facts, that madame de Maintenon wept, that the king ſeemed affected and ſaid, 'If 'the proteſtants have ſuffered in their 'perſons and goods, I hope God will not 'impute to me the violences I never 'commanded.' Lewis deceived himſelf by this hope; God puniſhes kings who are ignorant of what paſſes in their dominions.

* Memoirs of madame de Glapion.

† Queen Chriſtina, in a letter to the chevalier de Terlon, having expreſſed her diſapprobation of the dra-gonade, (for ſo this perſecution was called) Bayle ſaid it was a remainder of proteſtantiſm.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

Madame de Maintenon's *paſſion for the king.*

THE deſtiny of madame de Maintenon was not yet determined, nor was her heart at eaſe. The ſhame of being in love at any age, the indecency of being ſo at hers, perhaps her confuſion at ſuſpecting in herſelf deſires but ill repreſt, and hopes too fondly indulged, the fear of occaſioning in the king thoſe inattentions which now troubled her devotions, her languor in exerciſes of piety, formerly practiſed with ſo much fervor, grief to find the king's preſence ſo neceſſary to her happineſs, her regret at being obliged to avoid his viſits, altogether threw her into great perplexity and uneaſineſs; her elevation appeared to her a miracle, her love a phrenzy.

She was particularly apprehenſive that ſhe ſhould be accuſed of having made religion ſubſervient to her ſchemes for raiſing herſelf, and of aſſuming an appearance of piety, to fill the place of a miſtreſs; this idea was inſupportable to her, even conſcious virtue cannot exalt itſelf into a contempt of human judgments. She trembled at the bare ſuſpicion of filling a rank ſtained with vices which ſhe abhorred, and although certain of filling it without guilt, ſhe was as much alarmed

at the ſuſpicions that might be entertained, or feigned to be ſo, as at that which ſhe was ſure of not contributing to. She thought ſhe was accountable to God for all the raſh cenſures which the court might form againſt her, either through envy at her fortune, or ignorance of her ſituation.

What ſhould ſhe then do? Should ſhe quit the court, that was to leave the king, to leave the better part of herſelf, to leave the kindeſt, the moſt reſpectable of friends. Yet, ſhould ſhe remain at court, ſhe hazarded the loſs of her reputation, and gave ſcandal to all Europe, already aſtoniſhed at that mixture of apparent piety and ſuſpected frailty. Love made the firſt impoſſible to perform, and the ſecond was inconſiſtent with virtue. In reſolving to leave the court, ſhe found ſomething of meanneſs and hypocriſy, ſince ſhe well knew that the king would either oblige her to remain there, or recal her if ſhe went, and that ſhe could neither diſobey his orders, nor reſiſt his intreaties; ſhe was afraid that the public, which had ſo cruelly ridiculed the flight of Valliere, would attribute her retreat to a project ſhe had formed for enſlaving the prince ſtill more, and that her refuſal to return would be thought the effect of the ſame refined artifice. In reſolving to ſtay, ſhe found every incitement but fame. In

vain

vain did ſhe condemn herſelf for ſuch a ſlaviſh dependence upon public opinion; ſhe was not able to ſhake off the yoke, and ſhe was the ſport of ſentiments which a woman in love admits of, but which a devotee thinks criminal.

Thus torn with conflicting paſſions, ſhe had none whoſe opinion ſhe could aſk, none whoſe advice ſhe might regulate her conduct by. At a certain age a woman will not tell her moſt faithful friend that ſhe is in love; to her confeſſor ſhe will own it at no age. Madame de Maintenon tortured with fears, perplexed with uneaſy doubts, certainly told her confeſſor that ſhe was beloved. The abbé Gobelin, who always repreſented to her, God conducting her by the hand, vanquiſhed her ſcruples, and by inſiſting greatly upon the injury ſhe would do the king, opened her eyes, to ſee that ſhe would do herſelf. The ſalvation of a prince, ſo deſervedly dear to her, was in danger, to quit him was to deprive him of all that could engage his return to God, it was to ſnatch from him his conſolation and his ſupport, and irreverently to oppoſe the deſigns of providence. Let his return to God be effected by virtue, by grace, or by love, it was of little importance, provided he did return to him. Madame de Maintenon was eaſily perſuaded; her heart pleaded for the king, ſtill more forcibly

than her confeſſor. Gobelin incapable of foreſeeing even the neareſt events, regulated her conduct as if he had foreſeen the moſt diſtant. Weak and narrow minds often perform what would ſeem only the production of deep reflexion, and extenſive knowledge.

Madame de Maintenon, however, either to try the king's inclinations, or to accuſtom him to her abſence, deſired he would permit her to ſpend a month at her eſtate: ſhe made this requeſt notwithſtanding the inſinuations, of madame de Montchevreuil, who let her underſtand that thoſe hours the king was wont to ſpend with her, and for which all the court envied her, ſhe would find, at her return, had been ingroſſed by another. The dauphineſs, who had not forgot the party to Saint Cloud, from which ſhe had been excluded, readily conſented to her going to Maintenon, but it was more difficult to gain the king's permiſſion, 'You may go, if you pleaſe, madam, 'ſaid the king to her, I have impoſed a 'law upon myſelf, never to conſtrain 'your inclinations, but only reflect how 'much you will afflict me, by leaving me 'only for a ſingle day.'

Nothing is more tyrannical than the intreaties of love; madame de Maintenon laid aſide her ſchemes for quitting the court

court, and exerted all her prudence to eſcape the humiliating conjectures which were formed by her enemies, upon her equivocal ſituation with the king; ſhe ſucceeded, and the whole court was at length convinced that ſhe was a favourite without being a miſtreſs; and by the reſpect that was now paid her, ſhe found that her king was known to be only her friend.

CHAPTER VI.

Journies to Marly.

ALL the courtiers were now in her intereſt, part ſhe had gained by her humility and gentleneſs, and the reſt followed the greater number. She did not make uſe of theſe charms which time had ſtill left her, to fix her empire in the king's heart; her dreſs was ſuitable to an age more advanced than hers. She might have formed ſchemes to retain him in her fetters, but ſhe was incapable of artifice; in her behaviour to him ſhe preſerved a juſt medium between indulgence and reſerve, it had all the complacency of a friend, and all the reſpect of a ſubject. She was particularly ſolicitous to avoid thoſe critical moments, wherein a woman is neceſſarily obliged to give hope, or an abſolute denial.

Lewis eagerly embraced every opportunity of ſhewing the preference his heart gave madame de Maintenon over the marchioneſs de Monteſpan; the latter ſaying ſhe believed ſhe ſhould die very ſoon, and madame de Maintenon declaring that ſhe thought ſhe ſhould live a hundred years longer; that, ſaid the king, would be the greateſt happineſs I could hope for.

The miſtreſs received ſome new mortifications every day, at length ſhe became inured to them, and bore them with fortitude; madame de Maintenon was deſirous of ſparing her all, madame de Monteſpan never miſſed one.

The king found it neceſſary to remove her, to free himſelf from her importunities, and thoſe railleries which had ſo often amuſed him, but of which he was now afraid. For this purpoſe the journies to Marly were contrived. Lewis thought he ſhould be at liberty there, and conſequently more happy.

He named all thoſe perſons who were to attend him, and Bontems lodged them two and two in elegant pavilions. The ladies found toilets compleatly furniſhed in their apartments, nor were the men neglected. When the ladies were named, their huſbands accompanied them unaſked. The ſole ambition of the courtiers was to be

be of theſe parties *; this it was which gave an air of favour, the only good air at court. The princeſs of Montaubon who had never the good fortune to be invited, offered the princeſs of Harcourt a conſiderable ſum, to procure her permiſſion for attending the king to Marly.

While the company diverted themſelves at Lanſquenet, Lewis, free from reſtraint, entertained madame de Maintenon, by his reſpectful attention invited his train to adore her whom he loved, paſſed every evening in her apartment, and aſſuredly did not, in theſe agreeable interviews diſengage his heart.

The marchioneſs de Monteſpan, whom the king would have always excluded from theſe parties, and whom madame de Maintenon often invited through decency or through compaſſion, ſaw herſelf neglected with ſeeming fortitude, maintained to every one that her reign would return, and had the mortification to find that no one believed her.

She ſuffered ſome ſatirical hints to eſcape her from time to time, forgetting that Lewis neither loved to rally, nor to be rallied. 'Sire, ſaid ſhe one day to him, 'I have a favour to requeſt of you, leave

* Theſe parties to Marly laſted three days, they went on a Wedneſday, and returned on Saturday.

'to me the care of amuſing the company 'in the ſecond coach, and of preſiding in 'the anti-chamber.

She had it ſtill in her power to make a noble retreat, but it was decreed that ſhe ſhould be puniſhed for her paſt crimes, and that her rival's triumph which her inſolence had begun, ſhould be compleated by her imprudence.

Her repartees would have diverted madame de Maintenon, if they had not offended the king; one day when ſhe obſerved a great number of biſhops and curates in madame de Maintenon's anti-chamber, 'You are certainly, ſaid ſhe, hanging your anti-chamber, madam, for my funeral oration.'

The violence of her paſſions would have placed a bar between the king and her, which even the fall of madame de Maintenon could not have removed. The king was at firſt with difficulty perſuaded to believe that ſhe had uttered ſome very imprudent expreſſions; he was afterwards grieved to hear that ſhe ſhewed great complaiſance to thoſe who were diſaffected to his government, but was tranſported with rage when he found that in Paris ſhe had no other ſociety than that of his enemies, for enemies he believed he had.

The

The malecontents renewed their murmurings; thoſe who were excluded from the parties of Marly, ridiculed thoſe who were admitted to them in ſatirical ſongs. It was reported that one of the king's daughters had furniſhed ſome verſes in a poem which equally attacked the king and madame de Maintenon. Lewis was ſenſibly affected with this ingratitude: madame de Maintenon endeavoured to appeaſe him. 'Does this reſentment, ſaid 'ſhe, become the greateſt of kings?' 'Should this outrage, replied Lewis, be 'offered to the beſt of fathers?' Time aſſiſted madame de Maintenon in her ſolicitations, the verſes were forgot, and the princeſs was again permitted to grace the parties at Marly.

Envy and detraction did not ſpare even the innocence of madame de Maintenon: monſieur de Bâville intendant of Languedoc, when heſaw the libels that were wrote againſt her, gave this teſtimony to her virtue. 'I was acquainted with her, ſays he, 'when ſhe was madame Scaron, I have 'a hundred times carried her in my coach 'from the hotels de Richelieu and d'Albret to Saint James's ſtreet where ſhe 'lodged, I was ſeized with the ſame awe 'that I ſhould have felt in the preſence of 'a queen, her look alone inſpired it; all 'who knew her were ſurpriſed, that ſo 'much virtue could ſubſiſt with beauty ſo 'attractive, and poverty ſo extreme.'

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

The king's deſign in favour of Madame de Maintenon.

THE efforts of envy and hatred to abaſe madame de Maintenon, contributed to raiſe her. The king who was every day more charmed with her, who ſaw her revered in publick, who thought nothing great, nothing meritorious but what ſhe ſuggeſted and what ſhe performed, was ſo afflicted to find her pining in ſecret, and expoſed to all the malice of ſatirical wit, that he reſolved to place her above calumny, and to confer ſo many honours upon her, that her enemies ſhould be confounded, and even her friends amazed.

Notwitſtanding the murmurs of ſome diſaffected perſons, all gave way before madame de Maintenon; the courtiers without her perceiving it, paid her the higheſt honour. A glance of her eye, half a word, or a paſſing ſalute, made the happy courtier believe his fortune was made.

The court ſeemed to gueſs the king's deſign in her favour, the marchioneſs de Monteſpan alone, ſaw not the torch that kindled the dying embers of a conſtitution formerly ſo full of fire; every one but her foreſaw the conſequences of an engage-

ment

ment founded upon eſteem, and cemented by love.

A humorous wit deſigned a picture, in which la Valliere was repreſented with her hand upon the king's heart, mademoiſelle de Fontanges with hers upon his purſe, the marchioneſs de Monteſpan holding him with a fond embrace, and madame de Maintenon graſping his crown.

The king neither could, nor would live any longer without a miſtreſs, he had vainly hoped to conquer his predominant paſſion, and was weary of deceiving his God, and his confeſſor; he was reſolved not to marry again, becauſe the intereſt of his people oppoſed it; he ſaw three grandſons, and wiſely judged that princes of a ſecond bed, would give riſe to confuſion in his kingdom, and diviſions in his family.

Madame de Maintenon alone was capable of pleaſing him; he ſaw no woman in the court more worthy of his eſteem. He was habituated to her, her gentleneſs, her candor, her ſolid underſtanding and lively wit, promiſed him an agreeable companion and a faithful friend. It was true that ſhe had been united to a man whoſe character had been a little contemptible, but perhaps ſhe had only been his friend and not his wife. Five and twenty years had

had worn out that ſtain, and thirty years of deſerved reſpect and admiration had reſtored her to the rank ſhe had ſeemed born for; her marriage with Scaron was an injury of fortune which it would be noble to repair. He had no reaſon to apprehend that it would be ſaid ſhe divided with him that authority of which he was ſo extremely tenacious; he knew her to be modeſt, humble, prudent, incapable of abuſing the condeſcenſion of her maſter. But what will the publick ſay? It will ſay that I crown the moſt deſerving of my ſubjects; for what other than her would have refuſed the firſt employment in the court.

All that could diſſuade him from entring into this engagement, and all that could confirm him in his deſign of doing it, by turns preſented themſelves to his imagination: glory and love maintained an unequal combat for ſome time, but love was conqueror, and reaſon told him, he could never make a better choice.

Madame de Maintenon was doubtleſs dazzled, tho' not blinded by the firſt rays of the king's project: Lewis puſhed on by his paſſion, and perhaps perplexed by his ſcruples, reſolved to open his whole heart to his confeſſor.

End of the SECOND VOLUME.

22 JU 67